200

SOME

SERMONS

By the late Reverend and Pious

Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*

Minister of the Gospel at *Glasgow*,

Never before printed.

VOLUME I.

CONTAINING

SERM. I. Christ's Treaty of Peace with Sinners.
II. Christ's Invitation to the Heavy-laden.
III. The Spiritual Marriage.
IV. Believers are the Friends of GOD.
V. An Exhortation to Perseverance.
VI. A Call to behold One greater than *Solomon*.
VII. The Saint's Resolution to pay his Vows.
VIII. Self-conceit proves Self-deceit.
IX, X. The great Danger of Hypocrisy.
XI. The great Prejudice of Slothfulness.

...at the PREFACE by the Reverend Mr. *Willison* ... Sermons, being ... be Go... *Dundee*. ... fair old Hand, contains, ... Mr. *Gray*'s Sermons formerly ... severals never yet publish'd ... *URGH*, formerly in Print are but ...SDEN and JOHN ROBERTSON, ...jects that are treated at ...ung-house in the *Fish-market*. ... of Writ-copy now in ...M.DCC.XLVI.

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The Publiſhers to the Reader.

AS poſſibly ſome People, unacquainted with the Writings of the Reverend Mr. *Andrew Gray* Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Glaſgow*, may queſtion whether the Sermons following were truly written or preached by him; we believe, we need only appeal to ſuch Perſons of Underſtanding and Judgment as have read his Sermons formerly publiſh'd, who, upon comparing thoſe with thir now publiſh'd, muſt aſſent to this, That there is ſuch an exact Similitude in the *Stile*, *Phraſe* and *Manner* of the one, and of the other, as muſt convince that both are the Work of one and the ſame Perſon: And no Man, ſo far as we have heard, ever doubted that the Sermons formerly publiſh'd, under the Titles of, *The Myſtery of Faith*, *Great and precious Promiſes*, &c. which were aſcribed to the ſaid Mr. *Gray*, were truly his; and, when theſe Sermons now mentioned were firſt publiſh'd, Hundreds of the Perſons who heard them were alive.

But, leſt what is above ſaid may be thought not ſufficient to ſatisfy the World that theſe Sermons now preſented to you are Mr. *Gray*'s, we have further, in Support of our Aſſertion that they are his, to ſay, That the Copy from which we take the following Sermons, being a pretty large Volume wrote with a fair old Hand, contains, beſides theſe, ſundry of Mr. *Gray*'s Sermons formerly publiſh'd, and alſo ſeverals never yet publiſh'd; and ſome of thoſe formerly in Print are but ſingle Diſcourſes on Subjects that are treated at greater Length in the Volume of Writ-copy now in our Cuſtody.

99467

And, if you ask how we came by this Copy, we answer, That we got it from an honest and religious Man now alive in *Strathern*, who had it from an old Christian that died some Years ago in the *Highlands* of *Scotland*; which last-mentioned Person, sometime before his Death, declared to the other, who is still alive, that he got this whole Volume (from which the following Sermons are taken) from Mistress *Hutcheson*, who was some short Time Spouse to the Reverend Mr. *Andrew Gray*, and afterwards married to Mr. *George Hutcheson* Minister at *Irvine*; of which Mrs. *Hutcheson* you have some Account in one of the Prefaces to Mr. *Gray*'s Sermons formerly publish'd.

What is just now said is the best Account we can give, in a Consistency with Truth, of the Tradition of these Sermons, or their coming from Mr. *Gray*'s Hand to ours: But we insist upon what we say in the Beginning of this short Epistle, That the Sameness of the Stile of these with that of the Sermons formerly publish'd in this Reverend Author's Name, and which were first publish'd at a Time when many of his Hearers were alive, may satisfy any Man that both *those* and *these* are truly his.

Tho' perhaps there is not in these Sermons what may please those of nice Taste (who, unless they understand there are great Stretches of Eloquence in a Book, will not take Pains to read it) yet there is in them good Instruction for every humble Enquirer; and some Christians, who have had Access to read the Writ-copy, have acknowledged themselves well entertain'd, yea, greatly edified. And that all who read them in Print may reap the same Benefit, is the hearty Wish of,

The PUBLISHERS.

Edinbr. May 8th. 1746.

PREFACE.

THE following Sermons were preached near a Hundred Years ago by the eminently pious Mr. Andrew Gray *Miniſter of the Goſpel in* Glaſgow. *The Gifts, Graces, Experiences and Labours of this wonderful Youth were ſo very far above his Years, that we may truly be aſtoniſhed at them. For tho' he entred upon the Miniſtry and was ordained when not fully Twenty Years of Age, and continued in it only two Years thereafter (to wit, in the outer High Church) at which Time God found him ripe for Glory; yet, during theſe two Years, he in his Sermons handled a great Multiplicity of excellent practical Subjects, with great Solidity of Judgment, and Warmneſs of Heart, as one that truly believed and felt what he ſpake. This abundantly appears. in his opening up the* Myſtery of Faith, and the Uſefulneſs of it for promoting Sanctification; of the Faith of Aſſurance, and the Way to attain it; of the ſpiritual Marriage with Chriſt; of the Sin of Unbelief, and neglecting the great Salvation; of the Goſpel being hid to Unbelievers; of looking to Chriſt, of ſeeking and finding him; of Nearneſs to and Fellowſhip with God; of ſpiritual Enjoyments, and the Abuſe of them; of ſpiritual Deſertion, the ſpiritual Warfare and Mortification of Sin, the improving and applying the Promiſes; the Mercy, Love, and Unchangeableneſs of God. *As likewiſe in his Sermons* on Death and Judgment, upon Prayer, upon keeping the Heart, hearing the Voice of the Rod, *and many*

other Subjects; besides his Discourses at Sacramental Occasions, many of which he attended during the two Years of his Ministerial Labours.

His great Advancement and Progress in the short Time he lived made him the Wonder of the Age he lived in. He was a burning and a shining Light, of very uncommon Gifts and Experience in Christianity; and so admired and followed by serious Christians far and near, that these who could write Short-hand were greedy to catch every Word that dropt from his Lips. It would seem there was scarce ever a Sermon this Youth preached, at home or abroad, but was thus written, and preserved as a precious Relick of him; and, being gathered together in Volumes, they were long made use of in Manuscript, before they came to the Press. His Sermons shew, that he had great Acquaintance with the holy Scriptures, and with the Practice of Religion; that he had both a lively Faith, and a lively Fancy about Things spiritual and heavenly, and that he improved greatly in spiritual and experimental Preaching, and had a noble evangelical Turn in preaching Christ, and recommending him to his Hearers for every Exigence; that he understood how to divide rightly the Word of Truth, to separate between the Precious and the Vile, *the Converted and Unconverted, the Sincere and the Hypocrite, and to give each of them their proper Share. And, by the whole Strain of his Discourses, it is most evident how much he was exercised about the inward and practical Part of Christianity, and taken up in attaining and maintaining Communion with God; and how vehemently he thirsted and panted after the Salvation of others. His Expressions are very warm, rapturous and heavenly, and well-adapted to affect the Hearts of his Hearers or Readers, especially such as believe the Gospel.*

Mr.

Mr. Gray's *Cotemporaries in the Miniſtry bear Witneſs to his Parts and great Capacity: They ſay, He was of a ſcholaſtick Genius, and had made a conſiderable Progreſs in Reading and Study for the few Years he lived, tho' he was far from any Affectation of Learning in the Pulpit. They likewiſe atteſt, That his uncommon Gifts, Graces and Experiences were attended with ſingular Humility, Self-denial, Gravity, Prudence, and Diligence in his Work; and that his Sermons were accompanied with remarkable Power and Succeſs. And, if his Qualifications and Attainments were ſo extraordinary in 22 Years, what might they have been, had he reached to 52! But* our Times are in *God's* Hands, and the Number of our Months is with *him.*

Oh how will this holy, active and diligent Youth riſe up in Judgment againſt the vain, negligent and ſlothful young Men of our Day, who miſpend and waſte the Days of Youth, their beſt Time, in Folly and Things which cannot profit them, forgetting their Creator and the Things which belong to their Peace! Yea, how awakning, convincing and reproving may the Example of this very young Miniſter be to many Miniſters of the Goſpel, who have been many Years in the Vineyard, but fall far ſhort of his Labours and Progreſs! God thinks fit, now and then, to raiſe up (as it were) a Child to reprove the Sloth and Negligence of many Thouſands of advanced Years, and ſhew that he can perfect *his own* Praiſe out of the Mouth of Babes.

The Great Mr. Durham, *that was one of Mr.* Gray's *Colleagues in* Glaſgow, *admired this Youth, and highly commended him, ſaying, That he had a ſingular Faculty of preſſing home God's Truths and Threatnings upon the Conſciences of his Hearers, yea, in ſuch a Manner, that he often cauſed the very Hairs*

of

of their Head to ſtand up.——*Mr.* Gray *put a great Value upon Mr.* Durham, *as he had juſt Cauſe for it; and took Occaſion one Day, when walking with Mr.* Durham, *to expreſs ſome Reſentment againſt thoſe who left Mr.* Durham *to come to his Church. To which Mr.* Durham *anſwered,* " *Not ſo, Dear* " *Brother; for none can receive ſuch Honour and* " *Succeſs in his Miniſtry, except it be given him* " *from Heaven. I rejoice that Chriſt is preached,* " *and that his Kingdom and Intereſt is getting Ground,* " *and that his Honour and Eſteem doth increaſe, tho'* " *my Eſteem in Peoples Hearts ſhould decreaſe; for* " *I am content to be any Thing, or to be Nothing,* " *ſo that Chriſt may be* All in All."

If any ſhall object againſt theſe Sermons of Mr. Gray's, *becauſe of ſome Defects or Imperfections they may ſpy in them, I would deſire ſuch to remember, that they are ſuppoſed only to be written from his Mouth in the Pulpit, and that they were never deſigned by him for the Preſs; and that the Writers poſſibly might not be ſo careful to note down his Explications of Texts or Truths which he handled, as of other Things they might judge more edifying: And no doubt but in writing they have loſt both Words and Sentences, which in ſundry Places would have rendered the Connexion more natural, the Conſtruction more eaſy, and the Senſe more clear. Likewiſe it would be conſidered, that there are great Improvements made in our Language within theſe Hundred Years paſt. Notwithſtanding, theſe Sermons will be intelligible enough to* Scotſmen, *who have any tolerable Knowledge or Experience in Chriſtianity; and alſo moſt agreeable and edifying to theſe who are exerciſed to Godlineſs.*

I cannot promiſe that the Stile and Method of this ſpiritual and holy Youth (nor indeed of any Author) will

will suit every Man's Taste; but it appears by the many Impressions of his Sermons formerly published, that they are most acceptable to serious experienced Christians, who regard Matter more than Words. His Stile savours much of the primitive Gospel-simplicity; his Words are plain, homely and familiar, very much calculated for the Capacity and Edification of the weakest and meanest Reader; but at the same Time deserve to be much regarded by all, seeing they evidence the most intimate Acquaintance with the practical Part of Christianity, and have been signally blessed of God to the Instruction, Conviction and Comfort of many precious Souls. It may well be said of Mr. Gray, *what was said of that holy Man* Ambrose, He studied not to please and tickle Mens Ears, but to prick and affect their Hearts.

This young Minister was most zealous for God and his Glory, and exceedingly bent upon the Salvation of Mens Souls; and therefore he was most waking and warm in his Sermons, and laid out himself with great Fervency to discover to his Hearers their dangerous Condition by Nature, the Excellency of the Gospel-remedy, and to bring Arguments to perswade Men to come to Christ, and accept of his Offers of Salvation; yea, he even travelled, as it were in Birth, until Christ might be formed in their Souls. And this, being his habitual Frame and Disposition, might occasion his being less attentive to Stile, Words, Method, and Coherence in his Discourses.-----Likewise he lived under such constant Impressions of the Shortness of his Race, and had his Soul so much inflamed with the Love of Christ, and with Longings after that Heaven and Glory to which he was hastning, that it is not much to be wondered at, tho' he was sometimes led into abrupt Expressions, and even Digressions from the Subjects he was pursuing.

These

These Sermons now printed in this Volume were never printed before. I think scarce any will doubt of their being Mr. Andrew Gray's, *who have read his Sermons which were published long since while many of his Hearers were alive, because of their Sameness in Stile, Phrase and Method, besides the other Evidences adduced by the* Publishers *of their coming from the same Author.—They seem to have been preached mostly at Sacramental Occasions, at which Mr.* Gray *was much imployed, the short Time he lived, abroad as well as at home: His Talent being so much adapted to Communion-times and Cases of exercised Christians, both Ministers and People were very fond of his Assistance at these Gospel-solemnities.*

O how warmly and zealously doth he in these Sermons press Sinners to fall in with Gospel-offers, and Christ's Treaty of Peace; that they may be reconciled to God thro' him! and to close with Christ's Invitation to the Weary and Heavy-laden, that they may come to him for Rest! to yield to Christ's great and rich Offers in the Gospel, and come and be married to him; and thereby share of the high Dignity of being Friends of God! How earnestly doth he press Sinners to go forth and behold him that is typified by King Solomon, *but infinitely greater than he! as also to persevere in the Love of God! to pay their Sacramental Vows! to guard against Self-conceit, Hypocrisy and Slothfulness in the Service of God! which are the chief Subjects of the following Sermons, very proper to be insisted upon at Communion-seasons, and to be studied by Christians then and at all Times.*

As the Subjects of these Sermons are excellent, so the Author's Strain in them is sweet and moving, and cannot but be agreeable to such as are spiritually-minded. Perhaps indeed they may not be so much valued by those who prefer a pleasant Jingle of Words to solid Gospel-truths, or these who esteem no Sermons but those which are stuffed with witty Sayings, uncommon Words and Phrases, or Quotations from antient or foreign Authors; or these who would have Sermons curiously adorned with a Strain of fine Reasoning, or a pretty Cadency of neat handsom Expressions.—I do not quarrel these who have a Talent for composing such polite Sermons, providing

viding the main Design of Preaching be kept chiefly in their Eye, which is to bring perishing Souls to a crucified Christ: But, alas, it is to be feared this is too much forgot by many! But as the Excellence and Value of Things is to be reckoned from their Usefulness and Fitness to answer the great End they are designed for, and seeing the End of Preaching is to win Souls to a Saviour; these Sermons must certainly be the best, that do most effectually discover to Men the Danger of a Christless State, and the Happiness of closing with Christ. And likewise these Preachers are most likely to prevail with lost Sinners, who deliver Gospel-truths with most Zeal and Fervency, and in Words which savour most of Feeling and experimental Acquaintance with the Things they preach, depending upon the concurring Influences of the Spirit of God. I say, such Preachers have the fairest Lay for Success in convincing Sinners of their Misery in a natural State, and bringing them to a crucified Jesus as their only Remedy. And indeed, such a Preacher was the Reverend Mr. Gray, *and such were these his Sermons; and tho' delivered in a homely Strain, and with great Plainness of Speech, yet they came to the Hearers* in Demonstration of the Spirit and with Power.

I grant that in the present Age there is a great Measure of Light and Knowledge in the Mysteries of the Gospel bestowed both upon Ministers and People, but surely there is more needful for our Thriving and Welfare. Oh, if the Holy Spirit were poured out upon the Land, and all Ranks of Men therein; and particularly to inspire Ministers with more of that holy Zeal and Fervency in preaching the Word, and making close Application of it to the Consciences of Hearers, which appeared so conspicuously in the Author of these Sermons; what a Change might there soon be in the Face of our Affairs! Who knows how soon we might be so happy as to see the Kingdom of Heaven suffering Violence *(as in the Time of* John Baptist's *Ministry)* and the Violent taking it by Force? *as in* Mat. xi. 12. *and likewise to see* every Man pressing into it, *as in* Luke xvi. 16. *O what an agreeable Sight would it be, to perceive something of that* holy Violence and pressing Disposition *among our Hearers to enter into the Kingdom of God, that is, to see them have strong Desires to get out of a natural Condition, and*

to

to obtain an Interest in Christ; and such Desires that nothing in a World might possess their Minds, or take up their Thoughts so much as this great Concern of securing an Interest in Christ and eternal Life; and Desires that that might determine them to use the most strenuous Endeavours in the Use of appointed Means to get it! O that the various and awful Dispensations of God, whereby he hath been shaking these Nations, might be an Introduction to such a desirable Sight, and that Promise might in some respect be fulfilled to us, which we have in Hag. ii. 7. And I will shake all Nations, and the Desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this House with Glory, saith the Lord of Hosts!

God hath set Times for the Exercise both of his Justice and his Mercy. There are some Seasons that are remarkable Times of Judgment, which God appoints for executing his Anger against sinful Nations; these Times are called the Days of Vengeance, *when the Lord doth* avenge *himself of his* Adversaries, *Jer.* xlvi. 10. *Luke* xxi. 22. *And with such Days hath the Lord been visiting us in this guilty Land. O that Sinners were thereby brought to tremble for Fear of God's Anger, to humble themselves before him, and to turn to him that smiteth them!—— On the other Hand, there are Times which God hath appointed for Seasons of special Mercy, wherein he manifests himself to Men in the Displays of his Grace and Lovingkindness more than at other Times, by pouring out his Spirit with the Word, for awakning, convincing, enlightning, converting, reclaiming and reforming a secure and sinful Generation. May such a set Time for favouring Zion now come upon the Back of the awful Shaking of the Nations, which we have felt and are still feeling, so that many may repent, turn to God, and reform from their evil Ways and Doings! God forbid, we should abuse or misimprove such a Deliverance as God hath in his astonishing Mercy begun to work for us, as (alas) we have done former Deliverances of this sort! As the Lord hath begun a temporal Deliverance for us, may he also begin a spiritual Deliverance to us from our Deadness, Formality, and backsliding Disposition, and revive his Work among us amidst these declining Years! And may this be the continued Prayer of God's praying Remnant in the Land!*

J. W.

SERMON I.

CHRIST's Treaty of Peace with Sinners.

2 Cor. v. 20.

Now then we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us: We pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.

WE have excellent and glorious news from a far country to declare unto you to-day, we have excellent tidings from the court of heaven to make known to you to-day. They are theſe in ſhort; Heaven deſires to be reconciled to earth, the Perſons of the bleſſed Trinity deſire to be reconciled to you: And this is the thing that we are to preach unto you, as the ambaſſadors of Chriſt, that you would be reconciled to God. The contract of marriage is delivered over unto us; it is ſubſcribed by the hand of Chriſt, and is delivered unto us; and he hath ſent it here to-day, that ye might put to your hand. What do ye ſay to this? will ye put to your hand to this bleſſed contract of marriage, or no? What ſhall we report to Chriſt to-day concerning you? Shall this be the report that I ſhall carry back to Chriſt, I came to thy own, and thy own would not

receive thee? or shall this be the report that I shall carry back to Christ to-day, This people will not have thee to reign over them? or shall this be the report that shall be carried back to Christ to-day, This people shall be a *willing people in the day of thy power?* I shall not say much before I come to the words: Only I would say these four things unto you; 1*st*, There are five great voices or things that cry forth, O come and be reconciled to God. Doth not the transcendent beauty that is in the face of Christ cry forth, O come and be reconciled to him? Is not the great voice of the everlasting gospel, O come and be reconciled to God? Is not the great voice of his commandments, O come and be reconciled to God? Is not the great voice of the law, O come and be reconciled to God? And is not the great voice of your necessities, O come and be reconciled unto God? So that ye are surrounded with many things that cry out our text, O come and be reconciled to God. 2*dly*, I would say unto you, That, among all the suiters that ever sought your heart, there was never the like of Christ: I confess we cannot set him forth unto you; but sure we are of this, that Christ exceeds all suiters in his beauty, and he exceeds all suiters in his offers, and Christ's heart is more engaged unto you than all other lovers. Now, you would search to-day, whether or no ye will be content to take him, that this may be reported in heaven to-day, that ye have subscribed to the precious contract, *Even so I take him.* 3*dly*, I would say unto you, If once ye were acquaint with the Person that desires to be reconciled unto you, ye would cry forth, O for a tongue to commend him, and to set forth his praise! O for eyes to look upon him that is *white and ruddy!* O for a heart to lodge him in, who is the noble *King of glory!* and O for hands

hands to obey what he commands, and for feet to walk in the paths of his commandments! I will not say with some, that ignorance is the mother of devotion; but sure I am, that ignorance of Christ is the great ground why ye refuse to be reconciled to God. *Lastly*, I would say unto you, Would ye make all the Persons of the blessed Trinity to rejoice? would ye make the Father, the first Person of the blessed Trinity, to rejoice? would ye make the Son, the second Person of the blessed Trinity, to rejoice? would ye make the holy Ghost, the third Person of the blessed Trinity, to rejoice? would ye make all the angels in heaven to shout and sing for joy? would ye make all these blessed thousands that are round about the throne to rejoice? then obey this command, *Be reconciled to God.* Know ye not there is more joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner, than of nintey and nine that went not astray? I may say this by the way, O people of this place, what do ye know but this is the last embassage and commission from heaven that shall be delivered unto you to be reconciled unto God? what know ye but, before night, Christ shall close up the blessed treaty of peace that hath been between him and sinners? therefore do not delay to be reconciled to God, and to give you hearts unto him.

The apostle *Paul*, in the former verse, hath been discoursing most divinely to that truth, that *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*; and that, after the blessed contract was made up between the Father and the Son, he sent down the *word of reconciliation*, and hath *committed* that to his ambassadors; which commission and embassage, *Paul* here says, he was to preach. So that in the words we have read we have thir two things to be considered; 1*st*, We have the noble and divine exhortation

that is given to the *Corinthians*, and it is this, that they should *be reconciled to God*; that they should lay down the weapons of their rebellion, and go and seek quarters from God, and subject themselves unto him. The *second* thing in the words are these considerations by which the apostle presses this divine and excellent exhortation.

First consideration is imported in that word, *Now*, which relates to the former: And it is this in short, That since all things are ready upon God's part, since the contract is written and subscribed by his hand, there is no more *now* wanting but that we consent to the bargain. This is a ground why we should be reconciled unto God; all things are ready upon his part. Are ye ready? are ye ready to subscribe your consent?

A *second* consideration, by which he enforces this exhortation, is also in that word *Now*, and it is this; The time (saith he) that this blessed treaty and offer of peace is to continue with you is but for a *Now*, and a short time; therefore, since it is so short, ye would by all means endeavour to make use of the day while it is with you: We know not how soon the long shadows of the everlasting evening shall be stretched out upon us, when there shall not be such a desire or exhortation heard as this, O *be reconciled to God.*

A *third* consideration is this, That Christ is exceedingly condescending and loving in the way of his proposing and bringing about this excellent work, our reconciliation with God. And there are these two steps of Christ's condescendency in the words; *first*, That he sends forth *ambassadors* in his name, to desire and request you, *as in his stead*, that ye would *be reconciled unto God*, and give your hearts unto him. The *second* step of Christ's condescendency

dency in the words is this, That he *prays* and *beseeches* you to be reconciled unto himself: There is not a preaching of the everlasting gospel, but it is as it were Christ sitting down upon his knees, desiring you to be reconciled to him, and saying, I beseech you be reconciled unto me. O, will some say, why doth not Christ come himself to woo then? what is the reason that he comes not himself? I would give you these two grounds of it. The *first* ground why Christ comes not to suit his bride himself is this, We would not be able to behold him; yea, if Christ would come down and preach this text unto you, *Be reconciled unto me*, ye could not hear him speak, nor could ye behold him. He is indeed a lovely and soul-ravishing Object, whom ye cannot behold, nor dow not hear. The *second* ground why he comes not himself to suit is this, In a manner we could not believe Christ were real if he came himself. Indeed he doth not come himself, to remove many objections of misbelief. O if we saw him preaching this doctrine unto us, and did behold his matchless and transcendent excellencies shining in him; might we not cry forth, Will he ever take me? will he ever take me? When we should compare Christ's beauty and all our deformities together, we would cry, Will he ever take me? and when we should compare Christ's highness with our baseness, would we not cry forth, Will he ever take me? Therefore he hath thought fit to send out ambassadors to suit and woo a bride to himself.

A *fourth* consideration in the text, to inforce the exhortation, is this; The refusing the ambassadors, that are sent forth in Christ's stead, is as great a sin before God, as if ye did refuse Christ himself: For the wrongs that are done to his ambassadors, he takes as done to himself. Yea, know it, there is not

a preaching that is preached unto you by Christ's ambassadors, in which ye refuse to consent to take Christ, but it is as great a sin and indignity done to Christ, as if Christ were from this place personally preaching unto you, or as if ye would say to Christ before his own blessed face, We will not be reconciled unto thee.

A *fifth* consideration from the words, to inforce this exhortation to be reconciled to God, and to take Christ, is this, That Christ took exceeding much pains to bring about that glorious, that excellent, that advantageous work of our reconciliation and peace with him. Hath he not sent forth his ambassadors to invite them that are strangers, and to perswade them to come and take him? I would say this by the way, Ye cannot do Christ a greater wrong than to refuse to have him, and ye cannot do Christ a greater pleasure than to take him.

Now we shall come to speak a little to the exhortation in the close of this verse; it is this, *We beseech you be reconciled with God.* And in it we may take notice of these four things;

1st, *That it is the great request that Christ presents to sinners, and which is made known in this everlasting gospel, that ye would be reconciled to God.* The 2d thing in the exhortation is this, *That Christ, in pressing this request and desire, vents exceeding much matchless condescendency.* Is not this condecendency, that he, who is the Party offended, should be the first Person that should seek the agreement? is not this condescendency, that he, who never did offend us, should carry himself to us as tho' he were the Party offending? This is sure, we make the fault, Christ makes the amends. It had been no wonder to have seen man desiring to be reconciled

conciled to God; but, behold, here is a myſtery of infinite condeſcendency, that an offended God is deſiring to be reconciled with offending man. There is this, 3*dly*, in the words, *That Chriſt is exceeding willing that this excellent work and bleſſed deſign of our reconciliation muſt be brought about and accompliſhed.* And does not his willingneſs appear in this, that he deſires this ſo much? he beſeeches you to be reconciled to God. If ye could ask at *Adam*, he would ſay, Chriſt is willing to be reconciled unto ſinners; if ye would enquire at *Manaſſes*, he would ſay, Chriſt is willing to be reconciled unto ſinners; if ye would ask at perſecuting *Paul* concerning this, he would ſay, Chriſt is willing to be reconciled to ſinners, and to be at peace with them. *Laſtly*, This is in the exhortation, *That there is much freedom of love, and unſpeakable grace, that vents in Chriſt's preſſing this exhortation.* Doth not freedom of love vent itſelf in this, that we are *enemies* when he deſires to be reconciled unto us? for ſo it is imported in that word, *reconciled.* It ſays, Chriſt finds us in a ſtate of enmity when firſt he propoſes the offers of friendſhip. Is not this a declaration of the freedom of Chriſt's love in preſſing this deſire? There is nothing that moves Chriſt to deſire to be reconciled unto you, but love. If ſo we may ſpeak, many a ſore heart hath Chriſt had, and many a tear hath he ſhed, for theſe woful refuſals we have given him.

Now, in ſpeaking to the firſt thing in the exhortation, which is this, *That it is Chriſt's great deſire and requeſt that he preſents unto you, that ye would be reconciled and be at peace with him*; we ſhall not ſtand long to clear it. It is clear from *Job* xxii. 21. *Acquaint thyſelf now with God, and be at peace.* And it is clear, *Song* ii. 10. where there is the great voice of the goſpel, *Ariſe, my love, my dove, my*

fair one, and come away. As likewise from *Isa.* xxvii. 5. *Let him take hold of my strength, and make peace.* Now, when we press you or desire you to be reconciled to God, it imports these three things; 1*st*, That ye would let the weapons of your rebellion fall out of your hands, and submit and subject yourself to Christ; that is to be reconciled. This is pressed, *Jam.* iv. 7. *Submit yourselves therefore unto God.* 2*dly*, It imports this, That a Christian should give his hand unto God. This is pressed, 2 *Chron.* xxx. 8. *But yield yourselves unto God*; or, as the word is, *Give your hand unto God.* Ye know, when parties are to be married, they join hands together; so, when we press the duty of reconciliation upon you, it is this, Give hand unto God, and desire to resign and give over yourself unto him. The *third* thing imported in this, *Be reconciled unto God*, is, That ye would give your hearts unto God; according to that exhortation, *Prov.* xxiii. 26. *My son, give me thy heart.* Christ is coming to woo to-day, Christ is coming to suit to-day; are ye ready? are ye ready to consent to take him? Did ye ever see or behold him? I shall say no more of him, but this, He is *white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand.*

Now in speaking to this truth, "That it is the "great desire and request that Christ presents unto "you, that ye would be reconciled unto him;" I would speak a little to these things:

1*st*, I shall clear that it is Christ's desire and earnest longing to be reconciled with you. And there are these things that prove it. (1.) Do not his many commandments that are registrate in scripture, O sinners, speak this, Christ is willing to be reconciled unto you? There is not a command in which he desires ye should return to

him,

him, but his very heart lies in the bosom of that commandment. I shall only give you these three precious places, which speak to this his willingness that ye should be reconciled. The first place is *Isa.* lxv. 1. *I am sought of them that asked not for me, I am found of them that sought me not; I said, Behold me, behold me, to a nation that was not called by my name.* As it were, ye cannot do Christ a greater favour than to take a sight of him, and behold him. There is that place, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 11. *As I live, saith the Lord, I delight not in the death of the wicked; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel?* The exhortation is doubled, to point out God's willingness to be reconciled to you; *Turn ye, turn ye.* There is that place, *Song 6.* ult. *Return, return, O Shulamite.* Four times the word is there, *return*; which speaks Christ is willing to be reconciled unto us, and to take us home unto himself. So that ye read of these precious commandments of Christ, that he is willing to be reconciled unto us. There is that, (2.) which proves he is willing, and it is this; The blessed and the precious oath of the everlasting covenant speaks his willingness to be reconciled unto us. Doth not that oath, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 11. *As I live, saith the Lord, I delight not in the death of the wicked,* preach this, Christ is willing to be to be reconciled unto you? There is this, (3.) that proves it, to wit, the lowness of the terms upon which he hath condescended to be reconciled and to be at peace with you. O ye will get Christ at easy terms; ye will get Christ for a look, ye will get him for a listning of the ear to hearken. This is clear, *Isa.* xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye saved:* There Christ is gotten for a very look. And, *Isa.* lv. 3. *Incline your ear and hearken, and your soul shall live:* There Christ is gotten

go'en for a very hearkning and inclining your ear. (4.) There is this further that speaks Christ's willingness to be reconciled to sinners, namely, The very terms upon which he hath granted to give himself, he hath promised to fulfil these upon our behalf. It is promised Christ shall be gotten for a look: But O, says the Christian, how shall I get a look given to Christ? that is turned over into a promise, *Zech.* xii. 10. *They shall look unto him whom they have pierced.* The very look, upon which ye shall get Christ, is turned over into a promise; as likewise the very hearkning of the ear, for which ye shall get Christ, is turned over into a promise, *Deut.* xviii. 15. *A Prophet will I raise up of my people like unto thee, they shall hear him.* (5.) The many sad regretes and complaints that Christ hath had, why persons will not be reconciled and be at peace with him, prove Christ's willingness to be reconciled to you. Who can read *John* v. 40. and *Luke* xix. 41. and not cry forth, Christ is indeed willing to be reconciled to sinners? Ay, know it, Christ weeps more for the want of our reconciliation, than some of us ever wept ourselves. There is this, (6.) that proves Christ's willingness to be reconciled to sinners, namely, That he hath prescribed the way how a Christian may win this excellent thing, peace and reconciliation with God. This is clear from *Isa.* xxvii. 5. *Let him take hold of my strength, and make peace.* I tell you the way (says Christ) how ye shall win to peace; it is even this, *let him take hold of my strength.* There is this, (7.) that speaks Christ's willingness to be reconciled to sinners; and it is this, That notwithstanding of the many refusals he hath gotten from us since first this precious gospel was preached unto us, yet he continues with this, O be reconciled unto me: Will ye take me,

and

and embrace me? Christ, as it were, buries in oblivion and everlasting forgetfulness all our repulses of him. There is this, (8.) that proves Christ is willing to be reconciled unto sinners; and it is this, He will even take a sinner at the close of their time, when they have been giving the strength of their heart to vanity, and when they have been giving the strength of their life to idols; yet Christ is willing, if at last they will take him, to be reconciled. O is not this a mystery of love in Christ, that he is content to take you after all your idols have forsaken you? is not this a mystery of love in Christ, that he is willing to be reconciled to you when ye can do no better? Now, do all these things say, Christ is willing, Christ is willing to the bargain? But what should I speak of these things? Doth not his dying, doth not his travelling from heaven to earth, doth not his subjecting himself to the curse of the law, speak this, he is willing to be reconciled unto you?

Now that which, *2dly*, we shall speak to from this, *That it is Christ's desire to be reconciled unto sinners*, is, We shall propose some considerations to inforce this excellent thing upon you, that ye would obey Christ's request.

The *first* consideration is this, Know the Person with whom ye are to be reconciled; study the matchless excellency of him that desires to be reconciled, and at peace with you: It is to be reconciled with God. There is more oratory and rhetorick in that word, GOD, to perswade you, than we, if we could speak ten thousand years, could make mention of. Is it not an excellent thing to be at peace with God? is it not an excellent thing to be reconciled to God? to have that precious name given unto us, which was given to *Abraham*, James ii. 23. *And he was called the friend of God.* O what a noble thing were

were this, to have this ingraven upon our foreheads, that we are the friends of God? And know it, the want of knowledge of the excellency of him that desires to be reconciled unto us, is the great reason why we stay so long out in our enmity. Cursed be the person that is at peace with his idols, and is not at peace with God. There are four sorts of things persons desire to be at peace with, rather than to be at peace with God: And all these peaces shall certainly end in war. There are some persons that desire rather to be at peace with their conscience than to be at peace with God; that if once they could win to that length, to silence their conscience, and to have conscience speaking peace to them, that would be their heaven and happiness. But know, that your conscience may speak peace unto you, when there is no peace unto you from God. There is a second sort that would rather be at peace with the ministers with whom they speak, than to be at peace with God; that is, they are more desirous to have the minister speaking peace to them, than ever they were to have God speaking peace unto them: And they whose peace or war doth depend upon the minister's tongue, their peace shall end in war. A third sort of persons rather desire to be at peace with persons that are Christians among whom they live, than to be at peace with God: Some take more pains to keep up the peace and love they have from Christians about them, than to keep up a correspondence with God. I suppose there are some whose conscience may charge them with this, that the loss of peace with a Christian, the loss of love from one that is eminent in religion, did affect them more than the loss of peace with God, or the apprehension that that was gone did: I say, that peace shall end in war. A fourth sort of persons rather desire

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to be at peace with their idols, than to be at peace with God; and that peace shall one day end in a cruel war. Is it not known, that there are many who by all means endeavour to have their idols and their hearts united together by the constant chain of love and desire? and shall not that peace be declared from heaven one day to be a false peace? Now, take a broad sight of Christ, and this will exceedingly press you to be reconciled to him.

A *second* consideration to inforce this thing upon you, that we would be reconciled to God, is, There is a fourfold peace that attends a Christian that is at peace with God. There is a peace of *conscience*, that attends that Christian when once he is brought to be reconciled to God. When he knows he is in favour with God, then the disputings and debates of his conscience are silenced; then the storms, that troubled him before, are now blown over and gone, and there is a sweet composedness and quiet of conscience that is to be gotten by beholding the face of Christ. (2.) There is a peace in our *desires*, that is to be gotten by our peace with God. Before one be reconciled to God, their desires are divided among many different objects; but when once they come to be reconciled to God, then they cry forth, *One thing have I desired of the Lord.* Before we be reconciled to God, this is the language of our desires, *Give, give*; but, if once we were reconciled to God, we would have a bless'd peace and quiet as to these. There is this *third* peace that attends the Christian that is at peace with God, and it is this; In every lot and condition that a reconciled person can be in, he will have peace in it; there is no condition nor state of life that a reconciled person can be in, but he will cry out, *I have learned in every state wherein I am, therewith to be content.* A person reconciled

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to God, when he is under a cross, can with one eye look up to the face of a reconciled God in Christ, and cry forth, *I am sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; I am poor, yet possessing all things; I am cast down, but not in despair; perplexed, but not forsaken.* A reconciled person can get something in Christ that may afford him contentment in his darkest nights. A *fourth* peace that a reconciled person hath is this; He hath a peace under all the vicissitudes, the changes, the troubles and the anxieties that are here below. Would ye know the person that *is not afraid of evil tidings*? it is the person whose *heart is fixed, trusting in God.* Would you know the person that hath this motto, *semper idem*, always the same? it is the person that is reconciled to God.

A *third* consideration to enforce this, that ye would be reconciled to God, and obey Christ's command and desire, is this; All things are ready upon God's part, there is nothing left undone by him. Would ye know what this is, even this noble scripture, what it is? it is the contract of marriage sent down from heaven, subscribed by the hand of Christ; and he desires you to put to your names to it. It was long since *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*; now he hath sent out *ambassadors to desire you to be reconciled unto him.*

A *fourth* consideration, to press you to yield unto Christ's desire, is this: The time that this treaty of peace is to continue and last is but for an hour, even a very short time: Therefore it is of eternal concernment, that while Christ hath not delivered up the kingdom to his Father, while Christ is intreating you to be reconciled, ye would obey the exhortation, *Mat.* v. 25. *Luke* xii. 58. *Agree with your adversary quickly in the way,* lest the day come that he *deliver you to the tormentors,* and thence *ye shall not*

be

be delivered till you have paid the utmost farthing. Know it, and be sure of it, there is no treaty after death; there will not be such a voice heard by the souls in prison as that, O be reconciled unto God. Now I would ask this question at you by the way, Are ye reconciled to God? are ye at peace with him? If the most part of us would answer as we should do, we would say, I am not at peace with God. Then I say unto you, Agree quickly with your enemy while he is in the way; do not delay that excellent work of being reconciled to God.

A *fifth* consideration to inforce you is this, That a person that is reconciled unto God, he hath many soul-precious and excellent advantages waiting upon him: This is clear, *Job* xxii. 21. *Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace*; and the argument to inforce it is this, *Thereby good shall come unto thee.* Not this or that particular good only, but thereby *good* shall come unto thee. It were an endless work to describe the noble dignities of a reconciled person, it were an endless work for us to tell the riches of a reconciled person. I shall only point out the advantages that flow and come to a reconciled man.

1*st*, A man that is reconciled to God, he may go in with boldness to the throne of grace, and seek things from God. Would ye know what is the foundation of a Christian's spiritual boldness with God? it is even the faith of this, I am reconciled to him. O there will be much freedom used between a reconciled person, and a reconciled God: This is clear from *Rom.* v. 1, 2. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*; and then it is subjoined, *by whom also we have access unto his grace.* A person that is reconciled with God, he can *sit alone, and keep silence*; and a reconciled person can

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draw by the vail, and go boldly into the chambers of presence.

A *second* advantage that attends a reconciled person is this, He is the person that meets with many sweet manifestations of God, and of the love of Christ; he is the person that hath the manifest visits from God. This is clear from *Rom.* v. 1. compared with *v.* 5. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*; and then it is subjoined, *and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.* Would ye know why ye have not communion with God? it is because ye want reconciliation with him, as is clear, *Amos* iii. 4. *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?* It is impossible that there should be a walk of communion and fellowship with God, except reconciliation go before. Christ must be a *Prince of peace* and a *King of righteousness* unto us, before we can be admitted to the *banqueting-house*, and to have *his banner over us to be love.*

A *third* advantage that attends a reconciled person is this, He can walk with much holy submission and contentment under every sad dispensation that he meets with. When a reconciled person meets such a cross, he (as it were) comforts himself with this, I am reconciled. Let all terrors call themselves as in a solemn assembly against this man, he will cry forth, I am reconciled, and this may comfort me. Who is the person that *rejoiceth in tribulation*? it is the reconciled person. Who is the person that can endure the trial of *cruel mockings* and *reproaches*? it is the reconciled person. So *David*, *Psal.* cix. 28. *Bless thou, O Lord, and let them curse.* A person that is reconciled, he can *sit alone, and keep silence*, under all the reproaches that he meets with; and lift up his face to God, and cry out, O blessed am

I in this, that I am at peace with thee, tho' I be at variance with the world!

A *fourth* advantage that attends a reconciled perſon is this, They are the perſons that ly neareſt the mortification of and victory over their luſts. As long as a Chriſtian is under debates of their intereſt, one to a hundred if ſuch a Chriſtian overcome; but when once ye have win to this length as to cry out, *I am my beloved's, and his deſire is towards me*, ye will then have ſtrength to fight and overcome.

A *fifth* advantage that waits upon the reconciled perſon is this, O but the reconciled perſon hath a pleaſant way of going about duties, that others are ſtrangers unto! There is a myſtery in the way of a reconciled perſon's going about duties, which theſe that are ſtill diſputing of their intereſt do not know: It is a holy and ſpiritual art of praying, and of communicating, and of hearing, and of reading, that the reconciled perſon hath, which the reſt of the world know not. There is that advantage likewiſe that waits upon the reconciled perſon, namely, He is the perſon that can do duties moſt diligently, that can do duties moſt divinely, that can do duties moſt believingly, and can do duties moſt humbly, and can do duties moſt tenderly. Would ye know the conſtant Chriſtian in the exerciſe of duties? it is the Chriſtian that lives within ſight of his reconciliation: Would ye know the Chriſtian that can pray with moſt humility? it is the Chriſtian that lives within ſight of a reconciled God: Would ye know the Chriſtian that can walk moſt tenderly? it is the Chriſtian that hath Chriſt reconciled always before his eyes.

Now, there are ſome that may ſay, "Why is "there ſo much preſſing of this? Are there any that "are not willing to be reconciled to God?" I will name you ſeven ſorts of perſons that are not willing

to be reconciled to God; and I would desire you to search yourselves if ye be among them or not.

First, Such as will never quit their idols; these are they that are not willing to be reconciled to God: For ye must vent your willingness in this, in quitting the *seven abominations of your heart.* The idols must be put out, before Christ come in. Doth not your holding fast your idols between your breasts speak that ye are not willing to be reconciled to God? and are not many such here? are there not many who *hold fast deceit, and refuse to return.*

A *second* sort of persons, that are unwilling to be reconciled to God, are the persons that trust upon their own righteousness; such are mentioned in *Rom.* x. 3. *Going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.* As long as ye come not this length, to cry out, *All my righteousness is as filthy rags*, this speaks ye are not willing to be reconciled to God; till once ye come to this, to acknowledge ye have nothing to commend you to Christ, ye are never persons willing to be reconciled to God.

A *third* sort of persons, that are not willing to be reconciled to God, are the persons that delight in ignorance and estrangement from God, who *desire not the knowledge of his ways.* Are there not many who never received Christ in their minds? therefore they cannot receive him in their heart. Know it, Christ must lodge in your light before he can lodge in your heart: Can ye love him whom ye know not? can ye admit of him, when ye did never understand who he is? Ye that delight in your ignorance, that are strangers to the deep mysteries of the knowledge of God, ye are persons that declare ye will not be reconciled to him.

A *fourth* sort of persons, that desire not to be re-

reconciled to God, are these that dwell with contentment upon their resolutions and convictions, as tho' that were sufficient religion; these are persons that desire not to be reconciled to God. There are some that think they cannot want peace with God, because they want peace with their conscience. Some do suppose, because they are at variance with their conscience, therefore they are at peace with God; and they build upon that. Some think they are reconciled to God, because of their resolutions and purposes. But know it, a man may win the length of convictions, a man may win the length of resolutions, and yet be a person unwilling to be reconciled to God.

A *fifth* sort of persons, that are unwilling to be reconciled to God, are these that would take Christ as a Saviour, but not as a King; that would take salvation from Christ, but would not take commandments from him: Hence is that word, *Luke* xix. 27. *We will not have this man to reign over us.* It is not said, We will not have this man to save us; but, We will not have this man to be a ruler over us. Ye must take whole Christ, if at all ye think to be reconciled to him. And do not the disputings of his commandments speak this, that ye are not willing to be reconciled to God? That is a strange word, *John* xv. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*; as if Christ had said, Ye would testify your friendship to me by giving a general obedience to all my commandments.

A *sixth* sort of persons, that desire not to be reconciled to God, are those that were never convinced of their enmity. Are there not some here that never sat down one hour to mourn under the conviction of the enmity they had against God? and this preaches, ye desire not to be reconciled with God.

A *seventh* sort of persons, that desire not to be reconciled to God, are those that never took pains to keep any of the impressions of God constant upon their spirits. There is a threefold impression that is communicated by God unto a hypocrite, the not keeping of which proves him to be such a one. Sometimes the holy Ghost will ingrave impressions of sorrow for sin upon a hypocrite, sometimes the holy Ghost will ingrave impressions of delight in duty upon a hypocrite, sometimes the holy Ghost will ingrave impressions of love to Jesus Christ upon a hypocrite's heart: And this is that which preaches his unwillingness to take Christ, he knows not what it is to entertain any of these three.

Now, what shall I say unto him that sent me? Alas! there are many of us that are here, the shew of whose countenance says, We will not be reconciled unto God. O shall precious Christ go away to-day without one heart to embrace him? Shall it be told upon the mountains of *Israel*, that Christ was here to-day suiting our hearts, and there was none among us that would fall in love with him? Have ye seen him to-day, and have ye desired to be reconciled unto him to-day? I shall say but these five things, and close. The *first* is this, There are *many called*, *but* there are *few chosen*. I may say, without breach of charity, that there are some hundreds here to-day, that have been invited in the name and authority of the Master of this precious gospel to be reconciled to him; and I could wish there were one among every twenty here that has been content to take him. May we not question this, Whether we shall call Christ precious or undervalued? We must even put them both together, and say, O precious but undervalued Christ, pardon our slightings of thee. *2dly*, I would say this to you

you, Behold, behold, the day is coming, when Christ, who now desires to be reconciled unto you, shall eternally denounce war again you. Ay, know it, Christ must either be your friend or your foe. There is this, 3*dly*, that I would say, namely, That if all the angels in heaven, and all the saints that are round the throne, were admitted to give you their counsel, if *Paul* who preached this text were admitted to give you of this place counsel, it would be this, *O be reconciled to God.* There would not be another advice in heaven given you than this, *Be reconciled to God.* 4*thly*, I would say this, Do not the souls that have entred into the sweet fruition of these excellent things that attend the persons that are reconciled to God, do they not now sing, It is good to be reconciled to God? doth not *Abel* now say, It is good to be reconciled to God? doth not *Moses* now say, It is good to be reconciled to God? doth not *David* now say, It is good to be reconciled to God? do not the twelve patriarchs now say, It is good to be reconciled to God? and do not the twelve apostles say, It is good to be reconciled to God? and do not all that are here, that have tasted of the sweetness of reconciliation with God, say, It is good to be reconciled to God, and to be at peace with him? 5*thly*, I would say this, There are many that are here to-day, that may question if ever God and they were reconciled together, or if ever the covenant of reconciliation between God and them shall be made up. O it is sad to die an enemy to Christ, it is sad to communicate being an enemy to Christ, and it is sad to go over the borders of time being an enemy to Christ. O will ye seek to be at peace with him! Now, what shall I say? what shall I say unto him that sent me? Shall that 14th of *Luke* be verified of us, *We cannot come,*

have us excused? Shall some of you say, *I am building a house, I cannot come to Christ; I have married a wife, I cannot come to Christ; I have bought a plough of oxen, I cannot come to Christ; I must be taken up with my merchandise, I cannot come to Christ?* Cursed be the feet that go away from him; ye never went so blessed a gate. We shall even leave it at your door, and let this sermon be a heap of witnesses, that here ye were obtested and invited by all the vertues that are in the face of Christ, by all the joys of heaven, and by all the love ye owe to your immortal souls, ye have been desired from the consideration of all these to be reconciled to God; and upon your own peril will it be, if ye shall not take this precious ambassage off our hand. O take him, take him; ye had never such a blessed offer, ye never saw such a blessed sight.

SER-

SERMON II.

CHRIST'S Invitation to the heavy laden.

Mat. xi. 28.

Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

ALL Christ's words are *fitly spoken*, and are *like apples of gold in pictures of silver:* And, as *Solomon* speaks, *a divine sentence in the mouth of the King*, how sweet is it! I would in the beginning of this exercise summon all that are here, to come and wonder, and stand astonish'd. Old men wonder, young men wonder; old women wonder, young women wonder, at this noble sentence, *Come unto me.* It is near six thousand years since first the lost posterity of *Adam* did begin to drink of this noble *fountain* that is *opened in the house of David*, and all of them have drunk and satisfied their thirst, and yet the fountain is as fresh and full to-day as it was at the first beginning. Are not these two well met, a full Christ and an empty sinner? are not these two sweetly met, a spotless Christ and a sinful one, a merciful Christ and a self-destroying sinner? In the verse preceeding our text, Christ is declaring to his disciples, that *all things were delivered unto him*;

and (as it were) having received that inexhaustible fulness, the next word that he speaks is this, O *come:* As if he would have said, It is my delight to communicate unto you of that fulness I have received. I shall say that concerning him, Come ye to Christ whensoever ye will, ye shall find Christ above you faith; believe never so much good in his hand, he shall always be above you faith: And, come to Christ whenever ye will, ye shall always find him above your hope; hope as much in him as ye will, he shall always overcome your hope: And, come ye to Christ whensoever ye will, he shall always overcome your desire; seek as much from him as ye will, he will always give you more than ye seek: And, come to Christ whensoever ye will, he shall always overcome your thoughts; let your thoughts of the preciousness of Christ be elevated to never so high a pitch, yet, when ye come to Christ, sight and faith will tell you more than ever ye thought: And, come to Christ whensoever ye will, he will overcome your necessities; tho' your necessities be never so much, yet there is more in Christ than will answer them all.

Now, to come to the words we have read; we have these three things to be considered: 1*st*, We have a noble and precious command that is given by Christ; and it is, *Come to me:* A commandment that is gilded with love, a command that hath the heart of Christ in the bosom of it, a command that is full of mysteries, a command that hath endless riddles of the love of God shining in it. 2*dly*, Ye have the persons that are exhorted to come, and these are *all that are weary and heavy laden*; or, as the word may be rendred, all these that are under an unsupportable burden, and are weary in pursuit after their vanity;

vanity; and, if they desire to come, let them come. The persons that are invited are most comprehensive. Is there none of you that knows your name in this text? is not your name here in this text? is there not a person within these doors that knows their name here? Do not they call you *weary?* then I am sure they call you *heavy laden.* There is not a person within these doors but may be call'd one of these two names. Then I say, *Come.* The 3*d* thing in the words are the considerations by which Christ presses the exhortation; and we conceive that they are three.

The *first* is in that word, *Me:* As if Christ would have said, If there be no other argument to persuade you to come, let the excellency of the Inviter move you; or as if Christ would have said, Come to transcendent *Me*, come to beautiful *Me*, come to dying *Me*, come to crucified *Me*, and come to glorified *Me*. This is the topick and common place out of which many of our arguments can be drawn to persuade you to come. I think, in that word *Me*, in that one word *Me*, all the rhetorick and oratory of heaven is comprehended. What can entice you to come to him, if not that word *Me?* come to *Me*.

The *second* consideration in the words, to press them to come, is this, That he would *give* them *rest*. Is there any of you that would have rest today? then come to Christ. And, by the way, we may take notice of these four things from this consideration: The 1*st* is this, The infinite wisdom that shines in Christ's chusing of his arguments; he will make choice of that argument, to persuade you to come, that will be most effectual. What argument can persuade a *weary* soul to come, more than this of *rest?* There is a sweet harmony between our necessities

ceſſities and Chriſt's arguments. *2dly*, We may take notice of this from it, That there is not a neceſſity in a ſinner, but there is ſomething in Chriſt to anſwer it. Are ye *weary?* there is a *reſt* to be found in Chriſt; are ye *heavy laden?* there is *reſt* to be found in Chriſt; are ye under the wrath of God? there is *righteouſneſs* to be found in Chriſt; want ye holineſs? there is *ſanctification* to be found in Chriſt; want ye victory over your idols? there is *redemption* to be found in Chriſt; want ye wiſdom? there is *wiſdom* to be found in Chriſt. Ay, I may ſay unto you, If ye have a neceſſity that ye cannot ſee any thing in Chriſt to anſwer it, ye may ſay, There is ſomething in Chriſt to anſwer this, tho' I ſee it not. *3dly*, Take notice of this from it, That it argues no frame of ſpirit mercenary or legal, to be perſwaded to take Chriſt becauſe of reſt. Some perſons think, it is not good to take Chriſt for heaven. I ſay, It is both good, and commanded, to take Chriſt for heaven. This is certain, when firſt a Chriſtian engages with Chriſt, he loves him becauſe of his gifts; but, when he is well acquainted with him, he loves his gifts becauſe they are Chriſt's: So, firſt when a Chriſtian engages with Chriſt, he loves Chriſt becauſe of heaven; but, after ſome acquaintance with Chriſt, he loves heaven becauſe Chriſt is there. *4thly*, Take notice of this, That, let perſons purſue after reſt never ſo much, there is no reſt to be found but in Chriſt. O weary ones, will ye come and reſt upon him who is the *Rock of ages?*

The *third* conſideration in the words, to preſs perſons to come to Chriſt, is the excellency of this reſt: And we conceive it is deſcribed from three things in the words. *1ſt*, The freedom of this reſt is pointed out; I will *give* you reſt. And we conceive

ceive this word is put in, to obviate that ordinary piece of pride in persons, that, when they come to Christ, they think they deserve something from Christ. No, says Christ, ye deserve nothing, yet I will *give* you rest. 2*dly*, It is described from the matchless excellency of it: This is pointed out in that word *I*; I will give you rest. The Giver is most matchless and excellent, and must not the gift be suitable to the Giver? as the man is, so is his gift. 3*dly*, It is described from the perfection and compleatness of this rest. The word, that is here rendred *rest*, imports a compleat soul-satisfying rest. Alas! we may ask, What needs Christ arguments to perswade souls to come? is he not himself an argument? Now, to speak a little of the exhortation, *Come to me*; I shall speak a little to these five or six things.

First, I shall clear that it is the duty of a Christian to come to Christ. Is it not commanded? *Song* ii. 10. *Arise, my dove, my love, my fair one, and come away.* And it is commanded, *Rev.* xxii. 17. *The Spirit and the bride say, Come.* And is it not commanded? *Luke* xiv. 17. *Come, for all things are now ready.*

Secondly, We shall speak a little to this, What is imported in this duty to come? And we conceive it imports these five things; 1. It imports, that a Christian should be apprehensive of the distance between Christ and him before he come. It is impossible for one to come to Christ, before they know there is a distance between Christ and them. And, 2. This is imported in it, that a Christian should be active to overcome, and go over the distance: This likewise is imported in that word, *Come*. 3. This is imported in it, that a Christian should have some distinct and precious apprehensions of Christ, otherwise

wise he cannot come: We must know Christ's willingness and his suitableness to help us, before we can come. 4. This is imported in it, that a Christian should turn his back upon all other things beside Christ, and that he should subscribe a bill of divorce unto them. *Lastly*, This is imported in it, that a Christian should make choice of Christ for making up all his necessities, all his wants, removing all his fears, supplying and strengthning all his hopes; that if there be any emptiness in things here below, and if there be any imperfections in thyself, thou wilt look to Christ, and say, Here is a remedy.

Now that which, *thirdly*, we shall speak to is, To propose unto you some objections that hinder persons to come to Christ. And I may say by the way, That ofttimes we create objections to ourselves, and spin them out of our sinful curiosity, when it is not our exercise.

The first *objection* of one, why he will not come to Christ, is this; "O (says one) I cannot come "to Christ, for I know not if he will make me "welcome if I come."

I would say but these four words unto you that have this objection. *1st*, I would say this, *Be of good comfort, the Master calls you.* There is not a temptation that meets you in your way, but ye should answer it with this, The Master calls me. Thus, when ye set about the duty of closing with Christ, there come in so many temptations, that say, O dare thou close with him? Answer them with this, The Master calleth me. *2dly*, I would say, Did ye ever know of any that came to Christ, whom he made not welcome? I have heard of many exercises of the saints, and I am sure I heard never of this exercise of any, "I came to Christ, and he "made me not welcome." And, if there had been such

such a thing, it had been an exercise ere now. Did ye ever know a Christian under that exercise, "I "came to Christ, and he made me not welcome?" Did ye ever hear of any that brought up that bad report? 3*dly*, I would say this, Ye have Christ's promise to make you welcome, therefore come, *John* vi. 37. *Whosoever comes unto me, I will in nowise cast him out.* There is that, *lastly*, that I would say unto you that have this objection, Will ye try Christ; and, if he make you not welcome, come your way again: O try Christ, whether or no, he will make you welcome; and, if you perish, let your ruin be under his right hand, and even say that word *Esther* spoke, *If I perish, I perish*; I will venture upon Christ. Ay, believe it, I would say these three words unto you; If ye knew Christ, ye would go tho' he bade you not; if there were not such a commandment in scripture as this, *Come*, yet ye would come. Yea, I would say this unto you, which may seem strange; If ye were acquaint with the beauty of Christ, ye would venture upon him, tho' he forbade you. 3*dly*, I would say this unto you, Venture but upon Christ, and, if he kill you, let your blood be at his feet. Now, I hope this objection is removed, That Christ will not make you welcome. Will ye try him to-day, and see whether or no he will send you away.

The second *objection* of some, why they will not come to Christ, is this; "Alas! (say they) I am "not prepared to come to him, I have not the qua-"lifications that the scripture requires in them that "come; I am not *weary*, I am not *heavy laden*; "I am a person that hath not the spots of his peo-"ple, I am under the pressure of many idols."

I would say this to you, What divinity is this? Ye will not come to Christ because ye are sick! Think

Think ye any wise person would argue this; I am sick, therefore I must not go to the Physician; I am filthy, therefore I must not go to the Fountain to wash; I am under the power of my idols, therefore I must not go to the Redeemer; I am under the power of spiritual death, therefore I must not go to the Prince of life? I pray you, what arguing is this?

Then, 2*dly*, I would say this unto you that have this objection; If ye be matchless and chief of sinners, I hope ye will say that ye have the greatest need of Christ; and, if ye can have no other argument to perswade you, let your very necessities gain your consent.

There is this, 3*dly*, that I would say unto you; How call they you that object this? Do they call you *thirsty?* then I invite you to come; *Ho, every one that is thirsty, come ye to the waters.* Or do they call you *hungry?* then I invite you to come; Ho, every one that hungers, come and eat and be full. Do they call you *weary?* then I say, Come to him. If they call you *heavy laden*, (I hope none of you but will answer to your names) then come. Yea, more, Have ye a desire to come? then come: Have ye need of Christ? then come: Have ye a willingness to embrace him? then come. For any of these three are qualifications good enough, either willingness, desire, or necessity. *Whoever will, let him come.* I am sure, the greatest sinner within these doors may know his name here. Believe it, our name is more in this text, than if it had been set down name and sirname, Come ye such a person unto me.

The third *objection* of some, why they will not come to Christ, is this, "O (says one) I cannot "come to Christ, for I know not the way how I "should come to Christ."

I would only say this; He will guide you by his counsel, if once ye come to Christ. Come once this length, and he will guide the blind in the way they should walk in.

The fourth *objection* of some, why they will not come to Christ, is this; "I cannot walk to Christ, "altho' I know the way."

I say this unto you, Creep to Christ, if you cannot walk to him. *2dly*, I would say this unto you, If ye cannot walk to him, he will carry you in his arms; he holds the saints in his right hand. Say no more to Christ but this, I desire to come, but I cannot walk; and he will carry you. *3dly*, If ye cannot come to Christ, and take a grip of him, cast a greedy look to Christ; ye may look to him, when ye cannot grip him. And believe it, it is faith to cast a look to Christ when ye cannot take hold of him.

The fifth *objection* of some, why they will not come to Christ, is this; "I desire to close with Christ, "but I am not able to exercise faith upon him."

I will tell you these grounds why a person that desires to close with Christ, yet gets not leave actually to close with him. And, *1st*, We set about the duty of believing upon our own strength; but we must know this, that it is *he that worketh in us both to will and to do.* After ye have gotten a desire to close, ye must depend upon him for ability to close with him. The *2d* ground why persons that are willing, yet are not able to close with Christ, is this; Their apprehensions of Christ are not such as they ought to be. There is nothing that hinders active closing with Christ so much as want of suitable apprehensions of him. The *3d* ground of it is, The willingness ye have is not deep enough: Therefore, when thou hast some desires to close, and canst not get leave actually to close with him, go back

and

and strengthen thy willingness. And, *4thly*, This is the ground of it, that Christians may be instructed more in the truth of this, that *faith is the gift of God*; that tho' we desire to close, yet we cannot: However, do not thou quench thy desires. Think ye not, where a pursuing Christ is, and a desiring sinner is, it will not be long before they shall meet? Think ye a seeking sinner and a seeking Christ will be long asunder? Therefore do not quench thy desires to close with Christ.

The sixth *objection* of some, about the closing with Christ, is this; "I would come, but the devil "will not let me." You may take in this, "But "my own heart will not let me."

I would mind thee of that word, *Isa.* xlix. 24, 25. *The lawful captive shall be delivered, and the prey shall be taken from the mighty.* I desire no more of you but this, that ye would make the devil Christ's party, and then I hope ere long ye shall be delivered. If this be the thing that indeed sticks with you, I think Christ will soon shew himself *mighty to save*; he will give you a proof of this, that *stronger is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

The last *objection* of some, about their coming to Christ, is this; "O I would come to Christ (say "they) but I fear I dishonour him, after my coming, "by my walk; I fear I bring up a bad report upon "Christ if I come; I fear I turn the grace of God "into wantonness if I come."

I would say these three words unto you, *Mat.* vi. 34. *Take no thought for to-morrow, for sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.* Do thy duty, and let alone thy fears. *2dly*, I confess, it is as suitable for a Christian to come to Christ with fear, as it is to serve him with fear, or to pray with fear; it is as suitable to believe in him with fear. *3dly*, If thou dis-

dishonour Christ, thou mayst blame thyself, for thou hast many precious things to uphold thee in the day of thy straits. However, I say to that person, O close: He will once *present thee without spot unto God.* O Christians, prisoners of hope, comfort yourselves with this; Christ shall make a blessed count of you all, when he shall say that word, *Of all that thou hast given me, I have lost none.* Is there a person in hell to-day, that can say that Christ lost them? or is there a person in heaven to-day, that dare say that Christ hath not found them? Now that which, *4thly*, we would speak to is this, To perswade you immediately to close with Christ, and without delay to come to him. I charge you in the name of him whose divine sentence this is; I protest for this in the name of him who is the noble *Plant of renown*, that is the eternal Wonder of angels; I desire you in the name of him that is *white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand*, O come quickly and close with him. Obey that command, *Luke* xii. 58. *Agree quickly with thy adversary while thou art in the way*; and that, *Luke* xiv. 17. *All things are ready*, therefore *come*, or (as the word may be rendered) therefore *come quickly.*

There are these six considerations to perswade you to come quickly to Christ. The first is this, Now is the season and appointed time of coming, therefore come. Know ye not that word of *Solomon's*, *Every thing is beautiful in its season?* Now, this is the season of closing with Christ, therefore come. Is not this the season and appointed time? therefore do not delay. The second consideration is this, Every call and invitation of God unto you, to close with Christ, is no doubt the thing that should perswade you immediately to come; and this is the call from heaven to you to-day, O come. And what do ye answer?

will ye stay away? The third consideration, to perswade you to come presently, is this; Every hour's delay of coming to Christ is an affront done to him. How many persons will be here to-day, that will affront Christ, and tread him under foot? O shall this be reported in heaven concerning any that is here to-day, The congregation of *Glasgow* hath trode Christ under foot? shall this be reported concerning you? O will every one of you ask at yourselves, Shall it be I? shall it be I that shall be the ground of that report in heaven? The fourth consideration, to perswade you to come immediately and presently to Christ, is, There is not a refusal that ye give to Christ, but it is as a sword piercing his bowels: And is there a person so cruel here to-day, as to thrust a spear into the side of precious Christ? is there any of you so cruel as to do this? Ay, be sure of this, if ye refuse him, ye will thrust a sword into his side: There is not a preaching ye hear, but it is (if so I may speak with reverence of his Majesty) Christ sitting down upon his knees, beseeching you, saying, O man, or O woman, be friends with me; and dare ye refuse Christ, when he sits down upon his knees intreating you? I think, the very words that he speaks should make you to wonder. O shall Christ be sent away to-day, not having the consent of any? There is this consideration likewise, to perswade you presently to come; There is not one hour's delay of coming, but it makes you more unfit to come. I say, Be who you will, that will not come to-day, you shall be more unfit to-morrow; therefore delay not the time. Are there not some of you saying, Now I may spend ten years yet in following my idols, and then I will come? I say unto thee, *Boast not of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* It is like, the person that delays his closing with Christ,

Christ, shall never get leave to close with him. The last consideration, to press you immediately to close with Christ, is this; (I hope I may say it without presumption) Heaven is waiting for you to come. What will ye answer to this desire this morning, Come to Christ? One of these four things I must answer to Christ to-day; and which of them shall I answer? Either I must answer this to-day, I came to *Glasgow*, and they would not receive me: And are ye willing that this shall be the report concerning you? would not you be sorry to have this reported of you to Christ? Or this must be the report that I must carry back, I know not what to say of them; I have no understanding of their case; I know not whether they will come or stay away; they have taken it to advisement: O will ye take it to advisement, whether or not ye shall come to Christ? I may say to you, Ye should not take it to advisement; where there is no choice, there should be no deliberation at all: And therefore come, and take Christ blindly; he shall never disappoint your hope. Or this must be the report that I must carry back to Christ, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*; this must be the report, *The Bride hath made herself ready*; this must be the report, Come Lord Jesus, for they desire to come to thee. Now, which of these shall be the report in heaven concerning you to-day? O will ye not be perswaded to come? will ye make heaven to rejoice to-day? or will ye think of the matter, and speak your minds? or will ye make the the heart of Christ sad to-day?

I shall yet, to seal up this upon you, propose these considerations further to move you to come.

The first consideration is this, *All things are ready*; therefore come, and stay not away. O shall Christ open the market of grace, and there not be a

person coming to buy? Think ye it not sad that Christ should go out at our church-doors to-day, weeping as he goes, and saying, I came unto them, and there was none that would receive me, and there was none that would give me their heart? *All things are ready*: What wouldst thou have that is not ready? The contract is ready, the contract is subscribed by the blood of Christ, that is ready; heaven is ready, preparation is ready, all things are ready, but thy consent. O will ye put to your name! Shall this be returned to Christ? for this is indeed the contract, and not one name put to it. Are ye ready? are ye ready? If ye be, then come away; and if ye be not, then come away; do not stay, close with him.

A second consideration, to perswade you to close, is this; Ye shall find rest in Christ. There is a five-fold rest that ye shall find in Christ: 1*st*, Ye shall find rest to your consciences in Christ; all the challenges that troubled thee before, thou shalt get them answered in Christ. Is there a challenge in thy conscience? O soul, if thou come to Christ, thou shalt find an answer to it. Would ye have rest to your consciences? then come you to Christ. 2*dly*, Would ye have rest to your desires? then come to Christ. As long as ye are strangers to Christ, you desires are divided among many different objects; but, if once ye would come to Christ, your desires should be fixed and terminated upon one divine and most precious Object. 3*dly*, If ye will come to Christ, ye shall have rest for your love. Now it is pitched upon many different objects; but, if ye would once come to Christ, your love should have one most lovely and precious Object. 3*dly*, If ye would come to Christ, ye should have rest to your hope. Ofttimes ye place your hope in such a thing, in the

enjoyment of which there is no satisfaction to an immortal soul; but, if once ye would come to Christ, ye should find a suitable Object to place your hope upon. *5thly*, If ye would come to Christ, ye should find an eternal rest; therefore come away. I think, men and angels cannot tell what this rest that is to be found in Christ is. I would even say that word unto you, which that woman spoke, *John* iv. 29. *Come and behold a man that hath told me all things that ever I did.* I say unto thee, Come and behold a man that will give unto thee everlasting rest.

A third consideration, to perswade you to come to Christ, is this; Is it possible for thee to relish any of the precious things of Christ before thou come? This is clear in that word, *Song* ii. 3. *I sat under his shadow*; that is the exercise of faith: And immediately it is subjoined, *and his fruit was sweet to my taste.* Heaven will be sweet after your coming to Christ, sanctification will be sweet after your coming to Christ, duties will be sweet after your coming to Christ. There is a great fault among Christians, that I would reprove by the way, and it is this; Many of us are much more taken up in desiring death, than in desiring heaven. Let a Christian search his own bosom, and he will find ten desires for death, when he will not find one for heaven. What is the reason of this? it is because it is not so much for our hope, as for our restless anxiety, that we desire: And I think, a desire of death, that hath anxiety for its mother, hath not a desire of heaven as the end of it; I never love a desire of death, that hath not love as the principle of it.

A fourth consideration, to perswade you to come to Christ, is this; Would ye have your pursuit

after the world exceedingly quenched? then come to Christ. This is clear, *John* vi. 34. *He that comes to me shall no more hunger, and he that believes in me shall no more thirst.* This is a part of the meaning of it; If ye come to Christ, your desires after things here shall be much abated.

A fifth consideration, to perswade you to come, is this; Christ will make you welcome, and what can ye get more? he will make you welcome if ye come. If so I may speak, there are four times when Christ doth make one welcome. 1*st*, When they come out of the estate of nature, and are translated to the kingdom of Christ, then Christ speaks that word to them, Welcome stranger. I say, Come to Christ, he will make you welcome. 2*dly*, When a Christian is recovering from his apostatizing state and declining condition, when he begins to come home again, he will say unto him, Welcome, O backslider; whither have ye been going? and why did ye depart from me? yet welcome home again. 3*dly*, Christ makes one welcome at the feast of love, when Christ bids his friends welcome, when he commands them to sit down, and to eat and drink abundantly. 4*thly*, When first they are entred into the possession of heaven, when first their feet stand within the gates of the new Jerusalem, then Christ says this, Now welcome, my beloved; O prisoners and travellers of hope, welcome. I think, there is none of you but ye know there is such a thing as we call the courtesy of the city when a stranger comes to it. O who can tell the courtesy of the city that is above! can any tell it? I shall say this; Sight, sight, sight, will be the best commentary upon many of the mysteries of heaven; sight will resolve many things that are now dark riddles. Now, if

there

there were no more to perſwade you but this, Chriſt will make you welcome, O come away.

A ſixth conſideration, to provoke you to come, is this; Would ye make Chriſt to rejoice to-day? then come away. Heaven will wonder at your coming to Chriſt, in a manner; according to that word, *Song* iii. 6. *Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderneſs!* O ſhall this be ſpoken in heaven of you to-day, Who are theſe that are now coming up out of the wilderneſs! Shall angels wonder at you to-day? ſhall Chriſt rejoice at you to-day, when he ſhall cry out, *Who are theſe coming up out of the wilderneſs like pillars of ſmoke?*

A ſeventh conſideration, to perſwade you to come, is this; Mortification and heavenly-mindedneſs ſhall attend you if ye come to Chriſt; ye ſhall come up like pillars of ſmoke.

Now, to make all up upon you, I give you this eighth conſideration, which is, Come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall get heaven; what think ye of that? Come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall get righteouſneſs; what think ye of that? Come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall get ſanctification; what think ye of that? Come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall get adoption; what think ye of that? But why ſhould I ſpeak? Come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall get himſelf; and, when ye get himſelf, ye get all: Come to him, and ye ſhall get himſelf. I think, if we ſhould ſpeak till night, we ſhould be forced to cloſe up all with this, Come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall get himſelf.

Now I would ask at you, Are ye ready? O what ſhall I report to Chriſt! Believe it, I may ſay, heaven is waiting for your return. Now, would not you think ſhame to have a bad report carried to heaven concerning you? Is there none of you that will give me an anſwer? what ſhall I report concerning

you, and you, and you? what shall I report concerning you? have ye nothing to say that I shall report? shall I have a blank report to give to Christ? is there none that will give any thing to report? I shall give you leave to report yourselves, if this be your desire: O report what were your thoughts when ye were invited to come.

I shall shut up all with this; O come away; for the day is coming when there shall not be a word heard in heaven, nor earth, but this word, *Come*; when the Spirit shall cry, *Come*; and the bride shall cry, *Come*; and he that hath a thirst shall *come*, and he that wills shall *come*, and when all the weary travellers of hope shall cry, *Come*; O blessed Lord Jesus, *come*. O what a blessed day will it be when heaven shall cry, *Come*; and earth shall cry, *Come!* In a manner, *David* when he thought upon that day, *Psal.* xcvi. *ult.* (He in the former verses had summoned all the *hills, beasts of the field, fish of the sea, grass, hail, snow, vapour, stormy wind, old men, young men, old women, and maids*; O come, come all and help me to rejoice. What ails you, *David*? what is the matter, that you summon us to help you to rejoice?) I tell you the matter, says he, Let us *rejoice before the Lord; for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth.* *David*, when he comes to this, must call all the creatures to help him to rejoice. Now, are not these *glad tidings of great joy* unto you? The day is coming when there shall not be a word heard in heaven but this, *O come.* I would even ask this question, What a pleasant voice shall it be when Christ shall speak that word unto thee, when thou art standing upon the marches of eternity; *Arise, my love, my dove, my fair one, and come away; for, behold, the winter is past, and* your *summer is come, and the*

time

time of the singing of such *birds draws near!* Now, may not that provoke you to come?

I would say unto you, Believe it, all in heaven are crying unto you, Come away. Ye have the Father, the first Person of the blessed Trinity, crying out, O come away, and come up hither; the Son, the second Person, is (as it were) crying out, O come away, and come up hither; the holy Spirit, the third Person, is crying out, O come away, and come up hither. Yea, I may say, angels, if they were admitted to give you their advice, it would be this, O come away, and come up hither. If all your brethren and sisters that are now round about the throne, if all the spirits of just men made perfect, were admitted to give you their counsel, it would be this, Come away, and come up hither. Ye are surrounded about with voices that cry out, O come away.

There are five things that cry out unto you, O come away, come away. Does not the law cry out unto you, O come away, come away, and take Christ? These are the two great voices of the law, Deny yourselves, and come to Christ. This is the very great voice of *Moses*, O come away. 2. This is the very great voice of the gospel, O come away. This is even all the gospel, Come away, come away. 3. Does not your necessity cry out, O come away? Is there a necessity with any person here, but it cries out, O come away, and make use of Christ? 4. Does not the transcendent loveliness, the matchless beauty, the overcoming comeliness that is in the face of Christ, cry out, O come away, come away? Did ye ever see him? did ye ever see him? that the very beholding of him put you to this, O come away. Do not all the promises of the everlasting covenant, does not the sweetness of heaven cry out,

O come away? Where canst thou look to any thing, but thou meetest with a voice in it, saying, O come away? And will ye delay this precious summons of Christ? Now, is there a person here that shall be marked for no-compearance in heaven to-day, that will not answer the request of Christ? I intreat you, as you love your souls, come away. Now, are you ready, old men, that have *spent your days in vanity?* are you ready, men of sixty years old? are ye ready? O come away and embrace him. Old women, that have spent the flower of your years, come away. Young women, are ye ready? then come away. Will ye answer to your names? I shall say this, If ye will come to Christ when ye are eleven years old, ye shall be welcomer than if ye come to Christ when ye are eighty years old; Christ loves young religion well; And I shall give you these three grounds why Christ loves young religion well. The *first* ground of it is this, Young religion is much to the commendation of Christ's grace; according to that word, *Eph.* i. 12. *That ye might be to the glory of his grace, who first trusted in Christ.* O *Glasgow*, contend who shall be the first that shall come to Christ; for ye shall be the person that shall get first leave to put a crown upon his head. And will ye not debate for this honour and prerogative, O shall I be the person that shall put the crown upon Christ's head? The *second* ground, why Christ loves young religion best, is, Because it hath most temptations. Young persons have manifest temptations; and therefore, if they come over the belly of their temptations, he loves that well. And, 3*dly*, Christ loves young religion well, because it hath strongest temptations to wrestle with.

Now, I shall close with this, O are ye ready? are ye ready? Ay, believe it, Heaven is waiting for your return.

return. Now, what say you? what say you, O *Glasgow?* I shall say no more but this, I know not what to report, except ye give it; but this I say, I take the Father the first Person of the Trinity to witness, I take the Son the second Person of the Trinity to witness, I take the holy Ghost the third Person of the blessed Trinity to witness, I take angels to witness, I take all the saints that are round about the throne to witness, I take the rafts of this house to witness, I take the stones of the walls of this house to witness, I take your own consciences to witness, that this day ye have been invited to come to Christ: Ay, know it, I shall be a witness against you; tho' perhaps some of us may not embrace the call and invitation, yet we may be witnesses notwithstanding. I would rather that ye would come away. Ay, this should be the prayer of a minister, *Give me children, or else I die.* Now, will ye be intreated to come away? Ay, know it, if Christ hath not gained you, the devil hath gained you. These two *Comes* have been presented unto you to-day; Christ hath presented his *Come* unto you to-day, and the devil hath presented his *Come* unto you to-day; and which of them, think ye, that ye will obey? It shall be a dreadful *Depart* that shall be spoken unto you, if you will not come. However, to him that is coming, who will come, and will not tarry; to him that can perswade you to come, be praise.

SER-

SERMON III.

The Spiritual Marriage.

Rom. vii. 4.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

I would say unto every person that is within these doors, that word which *Ehud* spoke to *Eglon*, *I have a message from the Lord unto you:* And this is the thing that I am sent for to-day, I am come to woo to-day in the name of him that is the Prince of heaven, to present this desire unto you, that ye would be *married to another, even to* Christ Jesus, *who was raised from the dead.* I know not if I shall come speed this morning, but I think the matchless condescendency of Christ ought to provoke you. It is condescendency in him to *behold the things that are in heaven, and the things that are in earth*; and how much more condescendency is it in him to love the things that are in heaven, and the things that are in earth? and it is yet more

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condescendency in him to dwell with the things that are in heaven, and the things that are in earth: But this is the cope-stone of his condescendency, that he desires to be *married* to the things that are in heaven, and the things that are in earth. It is the opinion of the apostle, that *marriage is honourable in all things*; and I am perswaded of this, that in nothing is marriage so honourable as to be married to precious Christ. Young women, desire ye to marry? I have a noble Husband to present to you, and that is the noble *Plant of renown*, Jesus Christ. Widows, desire ye to marry? I have a noble Husband to present to you; it is even Jesus Christ, *who was raised from the dead.* I am sure, *it is better to marry than to burn* after the pleasures of a present world. In short, this is the thing that I have to speak to all of you that are within these doors; Will ye marry? I am sure he is *blessed that is called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb*; I am sure he is blessed that in the day of his visitation can get Christ in his arms, and cry out, He is mine, he is mine.

Now, to come to the words; The apostle, from the beginning of this chapter to *verse* 7. is insisting to prove, that believers are set free from the law by Jesus Christ: And he hath been making out this by a familiar resemblance and similitude in *ver.* 2. and 3. which is in short this; That for a wife when her husband is dead, it is lawful for her to marry again. And in *ver.* 4. he makes application of the similitude, and says to them, Now, *Romans*, your first husband is dead; I intreat you come and marry. And, in the *verse* we have read, we have these four things to be considered; *1st*, The noble privilege and advantage that believers have, they are set free from the law. *Now, brethren,*

thren, ye are free from the law. By this is not to be understood that believers are freed from the commanding power of the law, but we conceive it takes in these three things: And, 1. That believers are dead and set free from the rigour of the law; the law is not so rigorous a master as it was before Christ had abated the rigour of it. 2. That believers are set free from the curse of the law, and are dead to that. 3. That believers are freed from the law as it is an occasion to stir up sin in us thro' our corruption: The law was once a stirrer-up of sin in us, thro' the sin that dwells in our mortal bodies; we are set free from that in the law. The second thing in the words is the meritorious cause and fountain from whence this privilege doth flow, which is set down in these words, *Ye are set free from the law by the body of Christ*, that is, by the sufferings of Christ; ye are *dead to the law*, as *Heb.* x. 10. doth expound it. The third thing in the words is the noble design and end that Christ had before his eyes, in setting believers free from the law, and making them dead to it; and it was this, *That* they should *should be married to another, that is, to him that was raised from the dead:* Which in short is this, That they should be married to a risen and glorified Christ, and should be content to take him, and be married unto him; as if Christ should have said, I have freed you from your former husband, not that you should continue in your widowhood, but that ye should be married again. The last thing in the words is the duty that is imposed upon and required of them that are married unto Christ, *That they should bring forth fruit unto God*; and they should not be unfruitful nor barren, but should have a fruitful womb, always bringing forth fruit.

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There is only one note that we shall insist upon in this; and O that we could perswade you to take notice of it! It is this, "That it is the great design "of Christ in many of his works and dispensations, "that sinners should be married unto him, and be "content to take him for their Husband." This is clear in the words; *We are set free from the law by the body of Christ, that we should be married to another Husband, that is, to him that was raised from the dead.*

I tell you nine or ten glorious dispensations of Christ, the end of all which is this, that sinners should be married to him.

1*st*, What was the end that Christ came from heaven, from the bosom of the Father? was it not this, that sinners should be married to him? Wherefore c[illegible]e he from heaven? it was even this, to woo a bride for himself. Ay, know it, this was the precious design of spotless Christ, when he came out of the bosom of the Father; I go to woo a bride to myself. And O what a wonder was it, that he that was the only begotten of the Father, that had infinite fulness dwelling in him, should go out of himself to seek any proportionable object for his love!

2*dly*, Was it not the great design of all the sufferings of Christ? Wherefore was it that Christ was born of a woman? it was this, that ye may be married unto him. Wherefore was it that the blessed hands of Christ were pierced? it was this, that ye might be married to him. Wherefore was it that he was content to put a crown of thorns upon his head? it was even this, that ye might be married unto him. Wherefore was it that he was content to lie in the grave three days and three nights? it was even this, that ye might be married unto him. I say,

say, There is not a wound that ever Christ received, there is not a reproach that ever he met with, there is not a buffeting that ever he got, but this is the language of it, O be married to Christ. Ay, I say, That it is the great language of all his sufferings; O *Glasgow*, be married to Christ.

3*dly*, Is it not the great end and design of the gospel, that ye should be married to Christ? What is the design of the gospel? it is even that, *Mat.* xxii. 5. *Come to the marriage, for all things are ready.* We have no more to say to you but this, *Come to the marriage, for all things are ready.* The very substance of the gospel is comprehended in that one word, Be married to Christ. And I think, if this work were put by our hand, we have not much more to do; O be married to him.

4*thly*, It is the great design and end of the law, that ye should be married to Christ. *The law* (says the apostle) *is our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ.* Ay, if ye will consent to what the law bids you do, it is no more but this, Go to Christ.

5*thly*, Is it not the great end and design of his sending a settled ministry among his people, to deliver to you the gospel in one word, O be married to Christ! and that is all we have to say. Wherefore are we here? it is this, that ye should be married to Christ; and, if ye will not take him, I know not for what use we are here. If ye will not make the ministry among you unprofitable, and if ye will not cross the design that Christ hath in sending us, I intreat you be married to him; and, if this were done, might not we go to our grave in peace, if once ye be content to be married to Christ?

6*thly*, It is the great end and design of all the afflictions and sad dispensations that we meet with, O be married to Christ. There is not a cross ye meet

meet with, but this is indeed the voice of it, O come and take Christ for your Husband; and I am sure it is a blessed bargain. O! will ye take him?

7*thly*, It is the great end and design of Christ's discovering to us the vanity and emptiness of all idols and created contentments beside him. When he writes vanity upon such a cross, and upon such a cross, the great end and design of it is this, O be married to Christ. And ye would make this use of all the discoveries of the vanity of all your idols, to study to be married to Christ.

8*thly*, What is the great end and design of Christ's leaving so many promises upon record, so many great and excellent promises of the everlasting covenant? is it not this, that ye may be perswaded to take him, and to marry him? All the promises that are written in the volume of this book, this is the great voice of them to you to-day, O come and take him, and have him.

And, *lastly*, What is the great end and design of all the threatnings that are within this book? what is the great end of all the curses of the book of the covenant? is it not that ye may be chased to Christ?

Now, I say unto you, since there are so many things that cry out unto you, Come, come and be married to Christ, O will ye stand out against them all? Do not your necessities bid you be married to Christ? doth not your misery bid you be married to him? doth not his beauty bid you come and be married to him?

In speaking to this more fully, I shall speak a little to three or four things shortly. The first thing that I shall speak to shall be this, To propose unto you some considerations to press you to be married to Christ. O young women, will ye marry? old women, old men, will ye marry? The consideration,

ration that I shall propose unto you is this, I am perswaded Christ should outbid all other suiters. I have this to say in my Master's name, That Christ excels all that ever suited your heart; and he excels them all in these five. 1. He excels them all in his offers. What will the world offer you? what will the idol that courts your heart offer you? I say, Christ outbids them all. See, whatever they can bid you, I shall bid you a thousand times more: Come therefore away. Is there any of your suiters that offers you thus, Come and marry me, and I will give you a kingdom? Is there any of your suiters that court your hearts, that can give you such an offer as this, Come and marry me, and I will give you rest? I defy all the suiters that ever courted thy heart to propose unto thee such a thing. I tell you how all the suiters, except Christ, do court you; they court you as *Amnon* courted *Tamar*, they lust after your heart, and then they will begin and hate you: But O Christ is not so. Will ye come and marry? 2. I say, Christ exceeds all the suiters that ever courted your heart in his beauty and excellency: O did ye ever see such a a beautiful wooer as Christ is? had ye ever seen him, ye could not deny to give him an answer: Did ye ever see such a noble wooer as him that is the noble *Plant of renown*, the Light of the higher house, the *Rose of Sharon*, and the *Lily of the vallies*, the eternal Wonder of angels, him that makes heaven to shine? Now, did ye ever see such a beautiful wooer as Christ is? 3. Doth not Christ exceed all the suiters that ever courted your heart, in his right to you? I am sure, Christ hath a better right to you than all the suiters that come to you to woo. O will ye not consent to take him, to whom ye owe yourselves? 4. Christ exceeds all the suiters that ever courted

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your heart, in the easiness of the offers and terms that he consents to. What doth he require of you to make up the bargain, but this, O come and consent, and it is done? There is nothing that he requires of you but this, that ye would consent; and O will ye not consent to take him? 5. Christ excels all other wooers in his love, and the reality of his offers. I am perswaded there is not one wooer that loves you so much as precious Christ, O will ye take him? Think ye not it were a pleasant thing for every one of us to cry out, I am married to-day?

I shall, as a *second* consideration to press you to be content to marry Christ, point out a little to you the vertues of him whom we desire you to marry. I desire not that ye should make a blind block of it; but I shall point out Christ, who is the Suiter to-day, under these;

1*st*, I say, He that suits you to-day is a most excellent Person, the eternal Son of God; he is God equal with the Father: And is not that a most excellent Person? I wonder that, when Christ offers himself to us, we cry not out, Will ever he, that is *white and ruddy*, take me that am black as the tents of *Kedar?* I wonder that we cry not out that word, *After whom doth the King of Israel pursue?* I tell you, it is even after you, if ye be content. O how many cries hath Christ given to us, when we have been running away from him! How oft hath he said, O return and take me! and yet we have run away from him, who is the eternal Son of God.

2*dly*, We commend him from this, that he is a most beautiful and excellent Person. He hath no match; according to that word, *Song* v. 10. he is *white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand.* And I say to you, If I could sit down and commend Christ to you till night, I may close all my

discourse with these three words; 1. I might close it with that word, *Heb.* xi. 32. *What shall I say more? time would fail me:* What should I say more of Christ? time would fail me; yea, I may say, eternity would fail me in commending him. 2. We might close with that word, *Job* xxvi. *ult. Lo, these are but part of his ways, and how little a portion of him is known?* 3. We might close it with this, O come and see; that would best resolve the question. I say, Will ye come and take the trial? Believe it, *the queen of* Sheba *shall stand in judgment against you of this place, for she came a long journey to hear the wisdom of* Solomon; *and behold, a greater than* Solomon *is here.*

3*dly*, If ye will come and marry Christ, ye shall have an excellent dowry and tocher-good. What would ye have? I shall read four branches of the contract unto you, and ye may judge what to think of the rest by these four. The first is that, 1 *Cor.* iii. 21. *All things are yours.* Is not that a noble article? I say, Come and be married to Christ, and all things shall be yours. What would ye have that is not within this contract? *Whether* Paul *or* Cephas, *or death, or life, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's.* Is not that an excellent article? The second article of the contract that I shall desire you to read is that, *Rev.* xxi. 7. *He that overcomes shall inherit all things*; that is indeed a step higher than the last. I say, Wouldst thou inherit all things? then come and be married to Christ. What wouldst thou seek? for Christ hath all things within the contract, and the inheritance of all things. The third article of the contract that I shall declare unto you to-day is that, *Psal.* lxxxiv. 11. this is that which Christ shall give: *He will give grace*, is not that much? *and*

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he will give glory, is not that much? ay, *and no good thing will he withhold from him that walks uprightly*. O will ye come and be married to Christ! he will give grace, and he will give glory, and no good thing will he withhold from you that will be content to take him. The fourth thing of the contract that I would have you reading is that, 1 *Kings* iii. 5. *And God said, Ask what I shall give thee.* He bids him ask what he will, and he will give it him: As if Christ would have said, If there be any thing that is not included in the former articles, I leave a blank in the contract for you to fill up: Ask what you will, and have it. Therefore I desire you to come and be married to Christ this excellent Husband: And do you think ye will fill up any thing when ye come? I doubt much if ye will fill up any thing; however, it speaks this, Christ is exceeding willing ye should be married to him.

4*thly*, We would say this of him that desires you to marry with him, and it is this, That he is exceeding wise; *In him dwells all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:* And is not this a noble argument to perswade you?

5*thly*, There is this that I would say of him, That he is exceeding rich; and what would ye have? He is honourable, he is beautiful, he is wise, and he is rich; and are not all these exceeding excellent things to perswade you? Is not Christ Jesus rich, who hath *the ends of the earth for his possession?* and is he not rich, that is made the *Heir of all things?* I say unto you, O poor wretches, come and marry this Husband. Is there a person here that hath not a plack in possession? I intreat you come, and be the richest man or woman in all the world to-day, if ye will come and marry with Christ. Now, merchants, I have one advice to

give you; (I am sure it is one of the great devices ye plot after, to be rich) O merchants, come and buy this precious Pearl, and be heirs of all things, and exceeding rich. Is not this a noble advice? O merchants, will ye slight this invitation? ye need bring no money with you: I have one of the richest Jewels to sell to you to-day, if you will but be content to take him; a Jewel that will eternally make you up. O come and be married to him. Are there not some of you reduced to great necessities? O will ye come and take him, and ye shall be the richest persons in the world to-day.

6thly, We would say this, to perswade you to come away, He is one of the lovelyest Husbands that ever ye shall get. O if Jesus Christ were known, and if his love were known, we dought not abide away. Ay, I tell you this, If ye knew Christ, ye would woo him. I intreat you, women, begin to woo Christ, for this is not unsuitable.

There is this, *7thly*, that I would say to commend him unto you, namely, There was never a person that saw Christ, but they were forced to be friends with him: I defy the most desperate enemy that ever Christ had, but, if they saw him in his beauty, they should be constrained to cry out, *What wilt thou have me to do?* I tell you what I would have you to do; come and be married to Christ, this is the thing that heaven would have you to do: O come and be married to Christ. There was never one that saw him, that ever turned his enemy. The first sight that persecuting *Paul* got of Christ, made him to cry out that word, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

And, *lastly*, I would say this, to commend him, There is not a moving of the tongue in heaven, that is not taken up in commending him. O what are

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they doing in heaven? are they not commending Christ? And there is not a look in heaven that is not taken up in looking to Christ. O where are all their eyes fixed that are in heaven? are they not all fixed upon precious Christ? Yea, I say, there is not a thought in heaven that is not taken up in thinking upon Christ, there is not a desire in heaven that is not taken up in desiring Christ, and there is not one moving of the foot in heaven that is not taken up in following Christ: Do not they *follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth?* and must not he then be an excellent Person? Now, are ye content to marry him?

The *third* consideration, to press you to come and marry Christ, is this; Christ is inviting you today to come and marry him. This is the desire of heaven, *Mat.* xxii. 5. *Come to the marriage, for all things are ready.* Luke xiv. 17. *Come, for all things are ready.* I say, If there were no other thing to perswade you to come but only this, that Christ invites you, will ye not come?

The *fourth* consideration, to press you to come, is this; *All things are ready.* O *Glasgow*, will ye come away? Christ is ready, he is waiting for you; your marriage-clothes are ready; will ye come to the Man, and say, A marriage-disposition is ready? will ye come to the marriage? Is there any thing that is not ready? What can hinder you to come, that is not answered in this, that *all things are ready*? Perhaps one will say, I am not ready, how then are all things ready? I say to thee, Tell Christ in earnest, that thou art not ready; and then ye may be ready.

The *fifth* consideration, to press you to come and be married to Christ, is this; There is a blessedness pronounced upon the person that will come and take Christ, *Rev.* xix. 9. *Write, Blessed are those that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.* Not

only the persons that take, but the persons that are called, are pronounced blessed. And says he, Do not think this is a fancy, *these are faithful and true sayings of God:* He is certainly blessed, be whom he will, that is content to take Christ.

The *sixth* consideration, that may provoke you to take that excellent offer that is presented unto you, is this; That if you take him, and consent to the bargain, I assure you in his name ye shall never repent it. Are there not some of you, that curse the day that ever ye married such a husband? I say, Come here and marry, and ye shall bless the day eternally that ever ye married him: There shall not a day pass over your head, but ye shall say, *Blessed be the Lord, that gave me counsel,* and perswaded me to marry. I shall say no more but this, *Repentance* shall be *hid from your eyes,* if ye be content to take him.

The *seventh* consideration that we would propose is this; O come and take this noble Bridegroom and precious Husband, and ye shall have many joyful days in his company: The children of the bride-chamber shall not mourn while the Bridegroom is with them. Would ye spend your days with joy? would ye go to heaven with delight? O then be married to Christ.

The *last* consideration that I would propose unto you is this; I have this to declare, the consent of the Father is given to the match, the consent of the Son is given to the match, the consent of the holy Ghost is given to the match; all that is resting is waiting till ye put to your hand. Hath not the Father sent Christ once to die, to make up the match? He said that word, *Isa.* ix. *To you a Son is given, and to you a Child is born.* And is not Christ willing? I hope none will dispute it; he wooes you and in-

invites you. And is not the holy Ghost willing? he is content to seal the contract, if you will put to your hand. I shall only give you a view of Christ's wooing of a soul: Christ (as it were) stands without, and he cries, *Open to me, my sister, my spouse*; O come and take me: And he stands within, and he makes the soul cry out, Lord, I am content to take thee. So that Christ is both within and without doors: He is without, crying, Open; and he is within, opening the door: He both suits us, and moves us to consent. Now, is not this a noble and excellent draught that is drawn of him that is the Wooer? I tell you how Christ courts a soul: Ye know how the great monarchs of the world woo their queens; they send their picture by the hand of their ambassadors, to shew it to the woman whom they desire to marry. I say, Christ hath delivered his picture and pourtraiture to us, to shew it unto you; and what think ye of him now? for ye may read and see the beauty of Christ in this excellent book. What we can say, and what all the angels in heaven can say, of him, is contained within the volume of this book; O will ye not fall in love with him!

Now, *secondly*, I shall remove eight or nine objections of persons that are invited to come to be married; and I shall remove them all, from that excellent place, *Hos.* ii. 19.

The *first* objection that one hath against the marriage is this; "O (says one) I think, tho' I be now "content to marry Christ, yet I will break the bar- "gain ere long, and provoke him to give me a bill "of divorcement: I would take him to-day, but "my heart will be taken with my lusts to-morrow: "I should go out at these Church-doors with this, "I shall never have another husband but Christ; "yet

" yet I am afraid I should have another before I " sleep."

I say, Consent once really to take him, and that shall stand; according to that word, *I will betrothe thee unto me for ever.* Tho' thou shouldst play the whore an hundred times, he will keep thee in a marriage-state, your Husband shall never give you a bill of divorce. Know ye not that word that Christ said, *I hate putting away?* I say, Be whom you will that will consent really to-day, the marriage shall never be broken? I defy devils and your own hearts ever to break it, if once it be concluded. Is there any here that will be content to have the knot cast between Christ and their heart? O for the invisible knot of love to be cast between you and Christ! I defy all the hands of men and angels to loose it.

The *second* objection of some, why they will not come be married, is this; " I want marriage-clothes " to put on, I want suitable apparel for such a Hus- " band: And think ye I can go to Christ with these " rags, being all polluted with my filthiness."

That is answered from that word, *I will betrothe thee unto me in righteousness* and holiness, to put on thee, to clothe thee with the *white robes*, Rev. xix. 6. I say, Come and be married to Christ, and he will give thee clothes.

The *third* objection of some is this; " O if I " come and marry Christ, I commit so many wrongs, " and will offend him so much, that I am sure there " will not be a peaceable day between him and me."

I say, That is answered from the third branch, *He will betrothe thee in judgment:* That is, he knows what we are before he marry us; and therefore he will be to us as one that *knows our frame.*

The *fourth* objection of some is this; " Alas! " if

" if I come and marry Christ, I am sure he will " never continue to love me."

I say, That is answered from that branch of this precious contract, *I will betrothe thee unto me in loving-kindness*; I will *rest in my love.* Altho' there be nothing in thee to move to it, yet I will betrothe thee, because I will love thee; and I will keep the marriage, because I delight to have it so.

The *fifth* objection of some, why they will not come and be married to Christ, is this; " Alas (say " they) what shall I do? how shall I look him in " the face, I grieve his holy Spirit so much? what " shall I do, when I *play the harlot with many* " *lovers*? what shall I do, when I *love a reward* " *under every green tree?*"

I say, That is answered from that branch of the contract, *I will betrothe thee to me in mercy:* If thou offend Christ, he will pardon thee.

The *sixth* objection of some is this, " Alas! if I " be now content to take Christ and to marry him, " I am sure I will never keep my purpose; and " think ye that Christ will keep his purpose? Christ " consents to take me, and I consent to take him; " but what if I break the marriage? will not Christ " break also?"

I say, No, he will never break; there shall not be an article in the contract, but in his own time it shall be accomplished.

" Now, says one, I think ye have indeed an- " swered all the former objections; but there is one, " I doubt much if ye will answer it, and it is this; " I cannot get my heart up to the bargain."

I say, That is answered from that branch of the Contract, *And thou shalt know the Lord*; that is, And thou shalt believe on the Lord; knowledge in scripture oftimes passing for faith. Thou canst not

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consent to take him; thou hast a promise that thou shalt take him, and believe and consent. Now, if ye say that is not clear enough, there is a place, *Hos.* ii. 16. that does clear it, *Thou shalt call me* Ishi, *and shalt call me no more* Baali; *for I will take the names of* Baalim *out of their mouth, and they shall be no more named by their names*; but *thou shalt call me* Ishi, that is, *my husband:* So that thy consent is within the bosom of the contract. I think there is a gracious and pleasant emphasis in that word, *I will* betrothe thee unto me; that is, If thou wilt not consent to take me, yet I will betrothe thee unto me; the work must depend upon me. Now, how do they call you? is not your name *Desolate*, and is not your name *Forsaken?* O come and take Christ, and that promise shall be made out, *Isa.* lxii. 4. *Thou shalt no more be termed Desolate, nor thy land Forsaken; but thou shall be called* Hephziba, *and thy land* Beulah; *for the Lord delights in thee, and thy land shall be married:* That is, Thy name shall be *married* to the Lord, thy name shall be *Hephziba*, that is, *the Lord's delight.* Is not that a glorious name? O will ye change your name? O will ye change your name? Would ye not be content to be called a queen? I say, Come and marry Christ, and ye shall be such. I shall only allude to that word which *David* spoke, *Think ye it a small thing to be the king's son-in-law?* and I say, *Glasgow*, thinkest thou it a small thing to be a daughter-in-law to the King of heaven? He hath sent his Son to you, and will ye not take him?

Now, I shall only speak a little to these things, and close. If ye come and be married to Christ, there are these things that are required of you as your duty when ye are married.

First, If ye take him for your Husband, I hope

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ye will think it suitable that ye love him. Is it not a command, that wives should love their husbands? Now, if ye be married to Christ, ye must love him.

The *second* thing that is required of you, if ye be content to take him, is this; Christ must be the covering of your eyes, if ye marry him; according to that word, *Gen.* xx. 16. Let him be the *covering of your eyes.* I say, when I press that Christ should be the covering of your eyes, I press these two; *1st*, That ye should carry about with you the mark of your married state, that ye may tell every-body ye are a married person; yea, ye should answer all your temptations wich this, I am married. *2dly*, That Christ should be the covering of thy eyes, it is this in short, that your eyes should be closed from beholding all other objects but Christ; he should (as it were) be a vail over thine eyes, that thou shouldst not get leave to see any other thing.

Thirdly, If ye be content to come and be married to Christ, ye must submit yourselves to your Husband, *Eph.* v. 22. *Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands in all things* There is nothing Christ bids you do, but ye must be content to do it.

Fourthly, It is required of you, that ye must make a compleat resignation of yourselves over unto him; according to that word, 1 *Cor.* vii. 4. *The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband.* If thou be content to take Christ, thou must make a resignation of thyself unto him.

Fifthly, If ye come and be married to Christ, thou must endeavour to please thy husband in all things. Thou shouldst have this as the scope, how to please thy precious Husband Christ, 1 *Cor.* vii. 34. *The wife* (says he) *takes care to please her husband.*

And, *lastly*, If ye come home to be married to Christ, ye must bring forth fruit unto your Husband; this

this is the marriage-duty that is set down in the text: Ye must be a *fruitful branch by the sides of the house*, always bringing forth fruit. And I shall add this, If ye come home and be married to Christ, ye must reverence him. *Eph.* v. 33. it is a duty imposed upon wives, that they *reverence their husbands*. Now, are ye content to be married to this excellent Husband, all of you that are here? ask at yourselves if ye be minded to marry. There are only five reports ye can give to Christ; and which of them will ye give? *1st*, Is there any person here that will give Christ this answer, *I have married a wife, I cannot come?* Will ye give this report to Christ, I am married? Whom have ye married? I have married the world, I cannot come. I say, Cursed be the person that hath done so. But I say unto you, Will ye break the marriage, and come and marry Christ. The *second* report and answer, that shall be given, is that, *Rev.* xix. 7. *The bride hath made herself ready.* Shall this report be rendered concerning you, *The bride hath made herself ready?* Are ye indeed ready? O would we not make a lie concerning you, if we should report this, *The bride hath made herself ready?* Or, shall this be the answer we shall take to him, *Mat.* xxii. 5. that, when ye are invited to the marriage, ye will *make light of it*, ye will reject this precious offer? O shall it be told, that Christ came to woo you to-day, and there was never a person that would give him their heart? shall Christ go away to-day, not having a wife more than before? O who will be so blessed as to give Christ their heart! *4thly*, There is this report that some will give, even that which *Joash* returned to *Amaziah*, 2 Kings xiv. 9, 10. *The thistle that was in* Lebanon *sent to the cedar in* Lebanon, *saying, Give me thy daughter to my son to wife*; and, *Tarry at home,*

home, or return back. O shall this be your answer? O shall ye desire Christ to return back? Or, *5thly*, Shall there be such a person here as will give this answer, I intend to take him upon advisement? But should the dust of his feet advise? I intreat you advise not, nor delay. I may say to you, *Behold, the Bridegroom comes* unto you, O *Glasgow*; *go forth to meet him.* Yea, more, he is among you; will ye go and see him? Is there not one that will give this noble Husband one sight? Christ is begging marriage with you upon his knees, saying to every one that is here, Will ye take me? I say, If there be nothing that can perswade you to take him, will ye take him because he is importunate? Ye know it was forbidden for the priests under the law to take four sorts of women to wife, as is clear from *Lev.* xxi. 14. *1st*, He was not to marry a widow. Yet I say, Christ is our high Priest, and he desires to marry widows. Your first husband is dead, ye are widows; will ye come and marry Christ? Tho' he be indeed the glorious high Priest, yet he is content to marry widows; will ye come away? *2dly*, The priests under the law were forbidden to marry *divorced women.* Ye are divorced, yet he is content to take you; will ye come and take him? *3dly*, They were forbidden to marry persons that were *condemned.* Now I say to you the greatest atheist and stranger to God, I intreat you, and obtest you to be married to Christ. O profane persons, will ye take him; lay aside your profanity, and come away, and be content to take this glorious Husband; this glorious high Priest will be content to marry condemned persons. *4thly*, The priests under the law were forbidden to marry *harlots.* Now, have ye not *played the harlot with many lovers* many times? *yet return unto me, saith the Lord.* Have ye not played

played the harlot *under every green tree?* yet be married unto me, saith Christ. Now, shall I go away, and will ye not marry? I intreat you, think of it. O, if ye knew this excellent One that desires you to marry, ye would certainly marry, and be content to take him. If ye will be married to Christ, ye shall have much communion with him; if ye will be married to Christ, ye shall have much union with him; if ye will be married to Christ, ye shall have much of his secrets; if ye will be married to Christ, ye shall have much of his love, and ye shall have much of his company if ye be married to Christ, and ye shall have many tokens of his love, which are indeed better than wine; and, if ye be married to Christ, he shall take on all your debt. What are ye owing? Is there a person here that is not a dyvour to the justice of God? will ye come and marry Christ, and he shall take one your debt? since it is the law of nations that the husband takes on the debt of the wife. I say, Come and take spotless Christ to your Husband, and he shall take on your debt. I am sure, ye have nothing to give Christ, and he desires nothing of you, but that you come and be content to take him. Now speak your minds; and what will ye say? I would have you, O slighters of this blessed gospel, thinking upon that word, *Job* xxxi. 14. *What will ye do when he rises? and what will ye answer when he visits you?* I would pose your consciences to-day, What will ye answer to Christ when he rises up, and asks that question at you, What ail'd you at me, that ye would not take me? And have ye any thing to say why ye would not take him? have ye any thing to object against him? Now I shall leave it all with this; Would ye make Christ to rejoice? then, I say, be betrothed unto him; for *the day of his espousals* is

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the day of the gladneſs of his heart, Song iii. *ult.* Would ye have eternal fellowſhip with him? then I intreat you to be married unto him. Young women, do ye not deſire to marry? I deſire you, then, marry this precious Husband. I leave it with you; it is he that muſt perſwade you once to enter into this bleſſed contract of marriage; it is he that muſt ſtand within, and move you to conſent to take him. Is it not a bleſſed bargain? is your heart moving and leaping within you after it? Now, to him that can perſwade you once to enter into this bleſſed married eſtate, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON IV. *

Believers are the Friends of GOD.

James ii. 23.

—*And* Abraham *was called the friend of God.*

WHAT ſhall be done to the perſon whom the King will delight to honour? He ſhall be admitted to this precious bond of relation, to be *a friend of God. There is an evil under the ſun, and it is common among men,* that they talk much of their pedigree, of their deſcent and alliance; which is but a poor boaſting indeed, and a *diſputing about endleſs genealogies,* as the apoſtle ſpeaks: But, if

* Preached before the Adminiſtration of the Lord's Supper.

they would allow themselves to consider, they would see all men sprung from one common root, and that ere long death the king of terrors will cut off all these distinctions, of high and low, of great and small, of rich and poor. But the person who indeed hath relation to God, and may call himself the friend of the most High, he is truly a person that may boast of his relation, and say that he hath descended from a royal Prince. It was the blessedness of man, in his primitive estate, to have a blessed knot of friendship made up between him and God; but he, by reason of his pride, broke that knot: And we are bound to precious Christ, whose name is *Prudence*, and who hath *found out the knowledge of many witty inventions*, that he hath found out the precious way of making the blessed and more durable knot of friendship between God and us. There is nothing men do that advances them so much as this, to be a friend of God; yet I know, there is nothing in the world less esteemed than to be a friend of God. I would only say this unto you that are professors, Doth not your conversation, doth not your communicating, doth not your praying, speak that ye are not friends of God? What if Christ should come unto you to-day, and say, Behold *the wounds that I have received in the house of my friends*; if Christ should present that challenge unto us, which *Absalom* presented to *Hushai*, *Is this thy kindness* thou shewest *unto thy friend?* what would we answer when we were so reproved? should we not stand speechless before him, having nothing to answer?

Now, to come to the words we have read; the apostle *James*, from the 14th *verse* of this chapter to the close, is disputing much against a painted, a counterfeit and dead faith, a faith that hath not the handmaid of works waiting upon it; and, after he hath

hath ſpoken to this, he doth, in the verſe we have read, ſum up two great advantages that attend the Chriſtian whoſe faith is attended with works. The firſt advantage is, That ſuch a Chriſtian hath the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to him: That Chriſtian is the wonder ſpoken of, *Rev.* xii. 1. he is *clothed with the ſun, having the moon under his feet, and twelve ſtars upon his head.* Ay, that Chriſtian that is in the exerciſe of his working faith, is the Chriſtian that is clothed with theſe excellent robes, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; he hath not forgotten his ornaments, nor forſaken his apparel. The ſecond advantage, that reſults unto the Chriſtian who is in the exerciſe of a working faith, is this, he becomes the friend of God: He was *called the friend of God*; being *called*, in ſcripture, pointing out the real being of a thing.

There is only one thing we ſhall ſpeak to from this precious ſentence; and it is this, "That the "ſaints and believers in Chriſt are advanced to a "matchleſs and inconceivable pitch of dignity, "even to this ſtep of dignity, to become friends of "God." This name, of being a friend of God, is given to *Abraham* three times in ſcripture; it is given to him, 2 *Chron.* xx. 7. *Unto* Abraham *thy friend for ever*; and it is given unto him, *Iſa.* xli. 8. where the ſame precious ſtile is ingraven upon his effigie; the third time in this place.

Now, in ſpeaking to this, I ſhall touch a little on theſe three things;

Firſt, I ſhall ſpeak a little to this, That ſuch a dignity is attainable as to be a friend of God. And there are theſe things that make it out; 1*ſt*, Doth not Chriſt's coming into the world, and taking upon him

our nature, speak that there is such a thing attainable as to be a friend of God? Would ye know what was the great design of love that Christ had before his eyes in coming into the world? it was even this, to renew the broken friendship between God and man, the eternal plot of love that was laid in heaven from all eternity: This was the great upshot of it, that man, that was *afar off*, might be *brought near through the blood of the cross*. Would ye know what did cast the knot of friendship between Christ and us? it was even his blood. This is clear, *Eph.* ii. 13, 14, 15. Ay, if Christ had not condescended to die, we should have lien eternally in a state of estrangement from him. Hence hath he that name, *Zech.* vi. 13. to be the *Counsellor of peace between them both*, to be the blessed *Days-man* that *laid his hand upon us both*. But, 2*dly*, This may speak that it is attainable, namely, That it is the great design and scope of this everlasting gospel, that ye should become friends unto God. This is clear, 2 *Cor.* v. 20. *Now we then, as ambassadors of Christ, beseech you to be reconciled unto God.* Would ye have the substance of the gospel in one word, it is this, Be reconciled to God; and is there any that will deny such a precious privilege? 3*dly*, This speaks that it is attainable, to wit, That it is the end of the sacraments, that this friendship might be made up and confirmed. Would ye know what is the great end of the sacrament of the Lord's supper? it is even to seal up that blessed contract of friendship between Christ and a soul. I tell you this, to-day, Christ hath given us the contract to bring down to you, and we are to desire you to put to your names; there is a blank left in the body of it for you to put in your names: And, if ye would consent to it, Christ would put to his seal. There

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is this, *4thly*, that speaks the attainableness of it, namely, That Christ hath prescribed the means by which a Christian may win to this noble dignity of being a friend of God. This is clear, *Isa.* xxvii. 4. *Let him take hold of my strength, and make peace, and he shall find peace.* Would ye know the best and most compendious way to be friends of God? it is even this, to take hold of his strength to make up this blessed friendship. That which, *5thly*, speaks the attainableness of it, is this, That all the desires of a Christian, when he is in a right and spiritual frame, run in this divine chanel, that they may be friends with God. Would ye know what is the great centre where all the sober and spiritual desires of a Christian meet? it is even here, that they may be friends to God. *Lastly*, This speaks the attainableness of it, That it is the thing the devil doth most oppose and contradict: And doth not this speak there is such a dignity attainable, as to be a friend of God? I conceive indeed, there is as much in the very words as may make us to stand still and wonder that the dust of his feet should become a friend of his. I would only say this by the way, Blessed is the soul eternally, of whom that word may be said, 1 *Kings* iv. 5. (we alluding to it) *And* Nathan *was the principal officer, and he was the King's friend.* I say, Blessed is he who is the King's friend to-day, for he shall receive these soul-comforting tokens of friendship.

Secondly, We would propose unto you these precious advantages that result unto a Christian by being a friend of God.

And the *first* advantage that results unto a Christian is this, Ye are the persons invited to the feast to-day; and know it, except ye be friends to God,

ye shall incur condemnation if ye approach to the feast to-day. This is clear, *Song* v. 1. *Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O welbeloved.* They are the friends that are invited to eat and drink, *Song* ii. 10. *Arise my love* (or, as the word may be rendered, *my friend) and come away.* I do suppose there shall be many here to-day, to whom Christ shall speak these three most sad and most terrible words: 1*st*, There are some that shall be here to-day, to whom he shall speak that word, *Friend, how camest thou hither?* And, if I may so speak, I never love it when Christ begins to compliment, to call you *friends*, when indeed ye are enemies. There is that 2*d* word which we fear Christ shall speak to many to-day, namely, *Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* And there are some, 3*dly*, to whom he shall speak that word to-day, *My familiar friend, that did sit at table with me, he hath lift up his heel against me.* O but it is a dreadful sin to begin and persecute Christ when ye are feasting with him, and at his table to lift up your heel against him!

In speaking to this precious advantage, that friends only are invited to come; I shall only speak a little to these two things; 1*st*, I shall speak to these six precious considerations, to provoke these that are friends to come to this feast.

The *first* consideration is this; Christ, who is the great Master of the feast, invites you. We may say that word to you that are friends, *Be of good comfort, the Master calls you.* If you would multiply objections throughout eternity, they may be all answered in this, Christ invites you. *Mat.* xxii. 4. *All things are* now *ready, come to the feast.*

A *second* consideration, to move you that are friends to come, is this; That all things are ready,

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therefore come. This is Christ's own word, *Mat.* xxii. 4. *All things are ready*, therefore *come to the marriage.* Preparation is ready, faith is ready, mortification is ready, repentance is ready, tenderness is ready, Christ is ready, the feast is ready; therefore come. What objection have you, why ye will not come to the feast, that is not answered in this, *All things are ready?* what do ye lack, that is not to be found in Christ? and what do ye lack, that Christ is not willing to give? what do ye lack, that Christ doth not regrete your not imploying him for the having of it?

A *third* consideration, to provoke you that are friends to come to this feast of love, is this; That Christ is exceedingly offended with these that stay away. This is clear, *Mat.* xxii. 7. when they were invited and would not come, it is said of the King, *He was wroth.* Luke xiv. 22. when these that were bidden to the feast would not come, it is said of the King, *He was wroth.* If ye would not offend precious Christ to-day, then, friends, do not stay away. Yea, Christ vents his wrath in that of *Mat.* xxii. 7. *He sent forth his armies to destroy these murderers.* Ye may ask, What is the reason that persons that will not come to the feast are called *murderers?* I conceive this to be the ground of it, because a Christian that is a friend may be guilty of the body and blood of Christ by staying away, as well as he may be guilty of the body and blood of Christ by coming; yea, he may be almost as guilty by staying away, if not altogether, as by coming; ye may crucify Christ by staying away, as well as by coming.

A *fourth* consideration, that may provoke you that are friends of God to come, is this; There is a royal feast prepared for you. I confess, there is not much here for you who want discerning eyes of

faith: But a perſon, that is in the precious exerciſe of faith, will be conſtrained to cry out, This is *a feaſt of fat things full of marrow, and of wine on the lees well refined*; it is a glorious feaſt, it is a purchaſed feaſt, it is a dear feaſt. I would have you, Chriſtians, judging of this feaſt by the price that was paid for it; and I would have you judging of this feaſt by him that is the Maſter of the feaſt, (as the Maſter is, ſo will the feaſt be) and I would have you judging of the feaſt by theſe noble and ſpiritual advantages that reſult to one that eats this feaſt in faith. I may ſay concerning the wine ye are to drink to-day, *He that drinks of that wine* indeed, *ſhall thirſt no more; and he that eats of that bread* indeed, *ſhall hunger no more.* Chriſt is endeavouring to perſwade us to come, upon this account, that there is a royal feaſt prepared for you, *Prov.* ix. 2. *Mat.* xxii. 3, 4.

A *fifth* conſideration, to provoke you that are friends to come, is this; Chriſt is ſo willing and pleaſed that ye ſhould come, that he will not take the firſt refuſal off our hand, *Mat.* xxii. 3, 4. *He ſent forth his ſervants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, and they would not come*; and it is ſubjoined, *Again he ſent other ſervants*, ſaying, *Go and tell them that were bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dainties.* This is an evidence of Chriſt's willingneſs that ye ſhould come to the feaſt, that he will not take the firſt refuſal off your hand.

The *laſt* conſideration, to provoke you that are friends to come up to keep the feaſt of tabernacles, and to ſit down at his precious table, is this; That there is not much that Chriſt doth require of you to come with. There are ſome think, there is ſo much required of them, that they dare not approach. I would only ask theſe three queſtions of you. 1*ſt*

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Queſt. Have you a deſire to meet with Chriſt? then come. *Ho, every one that thirſts*, let him *come*; that is the royal proclamation of grace, *Iſa.* lv. 1. *2d Queſt.* Have ye no money in your purſe? then come. It is moneyleſs folk that are invited to this precious market of grace. As long as ye have any money, ye are not fit to come; but, when ye want money, ye may come with boldneſs. *3d Queſt.* Will you come without a price? A Chriſtian hath a price in his hand to buy wiſdom, and yet he hath no price. All that is required of you is to come without a price. Do not think to buy Chriſt with your preparation, nor with your repentance, nor with your tears; you muſt come and take Chriſt freely, as he is offered unto you.

Now there is that, *ſecondly*, which we would ſpeak to from this, that friends only are invited to come to this precious feaſt; and it is this: I ſhall give you four grounds why only friends are invited to come.

The *firſt* ground, why only friends are invited to come, is, There is none that will be welcome but friends. There are ſome of us have a friend's name, but we ſhall have a foe's welcome. Ay, whoever is a ſtranger to Chriſt, we do in the name of the Maſter of the feaſt, and in the name of this Bridegroom, deſire him to ſtay away that is not a friend to Chriſt. Let the perſon that is a ſtranger and an enemy to Chriſt, let him be *Anathema Maran-atha*; a terrible curſe to him if he approach.

The *ſecond* ground, why friends only are invited to come, is this; They only who are friends can entertain Chriſt in the banquet of love: There is no body that knows how to entertain a condeſcending, a feaſting Chriſt, but only friends; they know how to entertain him, and keep him in the chambers.

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The *third* ground, why only friends are invited to come, is, Because there is none that can exercise these graces that are suitable to one that would feast with Christ, but one who is a friend. Can an enemy exercise the grace of love? and that is a necessary qualification for one that would come to the table. An enemy cannot exercise the grace of sorrow for offending Christ, and yet that is a qualification of one that would approach the table of the Lord.

Lastly, There is this ground why only friends are invited to come, namely, There is none that is able to discern the Lord's body but only friends. As for strangers to Christ, they know him not; if he were standing by them, they would suppose he were another thing: It is only friends that can discern the body and blood of Christ, therefore they alone are invited to come.

I shall say no more to this, but, O friends, rejoice and comfort yourselves in this, that Christ is a-mind to entertain you to-day; this table may be to you a *door of hope*, this table may be to you the *valley of Achor*, in which ye may sing and rejoice as in the days of youth.

Now, there is this *second* advantage that comes to the Christian that is a friend of God, and it is this; That person shall have many of the secrets of God; that person, that is a friend to the most High, is a person that shall be taken in to know these deep secrets of the Lord. This is clear, *John* xv. 15. *Henceforth I call you no more servants, but friends*; and why? *for all that the Father hath revealed unto me, have I made known unto you.* And that is indeed the very bond of friendship, even communication of secrets. *Job* xix. 19. *My inward friends did abhor me*; or, as the word is in the original,

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The men of my secrets did abhor me. O Christians, and friends to the most High, comfort yourselves in this privilege, that ye are admitted to hear his secrets, and what is indeed his mind. I will tell you *six* excellent secrets that Christ doth communicate unto his friends.

The *first* is this, Christ will communicate unto you the secrets of your own state; he will let you know whether ye be in the state of nature, or in the state of grace. There is that excellent secret of your eternal election, there is the excellent secret of your having your names written in the book of life, that Christ will make known to you, *Psal.* xxv. 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*; and what is that secret? *and he will reveal to them his covenant.* As it were, he will bring forth the eternal decree of love that was past in their favours from all eternity, and bid them read. *Prov.* iii. 32. *The secret of the Lord is with the righteous.*

A *second* secret, that he will communicate to his friends, is this, the secret of light in unknown truths. So he speaks to his disciples, *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.* And that which *Paul* says of himself, 1 *Cor.* ii. 16. *We have the mind of Christ.* There are many dark and mysterious truths that are hid from these that are strangers to God, that Christ will reveal to his friends; ay, there are many dark riddles in religion, many mysteries in godliness, that Christ will unfold to those that are his friends.

Thirdly, There are excellent secrets of duty that Christ will unfold to his friends; he will tell his friends what is the duty of such a time, which others will not know. This is clear, 1 *Chron.* xii. 32. and there were *men of* Issachar, *that had understanding*

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of the times, that knew what Israel *ought to do.* A Christian that is a friend of God, when another beside him will not know what is his duty in such a case, he being a friend to the most High, will know what is his mind, and where he ought to walk. There are many secret duties that are made known unto the friends of God, that are not made known to others that are strangers to him.

There is that *fourth* great secret that Christ doth communicate to his friends, even the secrets of providence; he will make these known unto his friends. Sometimes we meet with crosses, and they are barbarians unto us, speaking in an unknown tongue; but Christ doth oft-times condescend to give to his friends to *hear the* voice of the *rod, and who it is that hath appointed it.* There are some times wherein there is not a providence, there is not a dispensation that a Christian that walks near God meets with, but he can know the language of it, and what God doth call for from him in it.

Fifthly, Christ will communicate the secret of a Christian's condition to him; yea, he will make known to you what shall be your condition in the world, and how ye shall go out of it: And sometimes Christ will make known these things that are dark to you in your condition, and give your clearness about them; *In his light ye shall see light.*

There is that *sixth* secret that Christ will communicate to his friends, and that is; Sometimes Christ will reveal to them secrets concerning the revolutions of kingdoms, and persons, and states; yea, sometimes he will communicate these to his own. *Shall I hide from* my friend *Abraham?* when he was to destroy *Sodom,* O, says God, *Shall I keep this from* Abraham? And that strange and remarakble word, *Amos* iii. 7. *God will do nothing*

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but what he will reveal to his servants the prophets: As it were, he is under obligation to make known these secrets unto them.

Now Christians, that are friends to God, ye may comfort yourselves with this, there are many deep and mysterious things that are made known unto you, that are deep secrets to the rest of the world: Yea, a Christian is living in *Goshen*, when the rest of the world are under *Egyptian* darkness that may be felt.

The *third* advantage, that redounds to a soul by being a friend of God, is this; They may come with boldness to God, to seek any thing from him. Is God your Friend? then ye may say, God is my Friend, I may be bold with him. Yea, when ye approach to God in prayer, if ye could introduce it with this, *O my Friend*, ye might pray with much confidence, and boldness of faith: And when ye go to the table, if ye could be admitted to say that word to Christ, *O my Friend, come along*, this might make you to come with boldness and confidence of faith.

A *fourth* advantage, that redounds to the Christian that is a friend of God, is this; He may come to God with confidence of coming speed. If Christ be your Friend, ye may go to him with much soul-perswasion of this, that he will deny you nothing. Christ speaks that word to his friends, which *Jonathan* spoke to *David*, 1 *Sam.* xx. 4. *Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.* Doth not Christ say that word to his friends, which king *Zedekiah* spoke to his subjects, *The king cannot do any thing against you*? Jer. xxxviii. 5. O what can ye ask from your precious Friend, that he will not give you! did ye ever put your precious Friend to do any thing which he was not willing to condescend unto?

unto? We may say that of Christ which is said, *Prov.* xviii. ult. *There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.* O had ye ever such a precious friend as this? I may say this to you, Ye may even prophesy good things upon his part, ye may lippen much to his hand.

A *fifth* advantage that results unto a Christian from this, that he is a friend of God, is this; This precious Friend, this matchless Friend, he doth sharpen and quicken you to duty. O but a sight of our precious Friend, Christ, would make us exceeding swift in the exercise of duty! This is clear, *Prov.* xxvii. 17. *As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpneth the countenance of his friend.* Would ye know what would make you to go with a divine celerity and speediness in the doing of duty? it is even this, a sight of your precious Friend Christ.

A *sixth* advantage that results to a Christian from this, that he is a friend of God, is this; He hath much conmmunion with God. Would ye know the person that dwells much with God? it is he that is a friend of God. Would ye know the person that walks much with God? it is the person that can have this ingraven upon his forehead, that he is a *friend of God.* This is clearly imported in that word, *Amos* iii. 4. *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?* which speaks this, that two that are agreed will surely walk much together. *David* vented his friendship to *Barzillai* in this, 2 *Sam.* xix. 33. when he desired him to come over with him to *Jerusalem*, that he might feed at his table. O if Christ were a Friend to you, and ye were a friend to Christ, ye would walk much together, ye would dwell much together. I would only say this, If ye would be friends to Christ, ye should have much of his heart, ye should have much of his hand, ye

should

should have much of his mind. If you would be friends to Christ, ye should have much of his heart; how should his soul breathe after you! and ye should have much of his hand, he would help you in all your straits; and ye should have much of his mind, he would communicate to you these precious and excellent secrets that are hid from the rest of the world.

There is this *last* advantage that redounds to a Christian from his being a friend of God, to wit, That God will give him counsel under all his dark and difficult straits: Is there a difficulty that ye are put to? if ye be a friend of God, he will give you counsel how to carry yourself under it, *Prov.* xxvii. 9. *Ointments and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.* If ye were a friend to God, ye would sometimes be be constrained to sing that song, *Blessed be the Lord, that hath given me counsel.* If once ye were a friend of God, ye might take up this as a ground of your hope, *Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards bring me to thy glory.*

I shall add this advantage also that redounds unto a Christian from his being a friend of God, namely, If he be a friend of God, He will sympathize with you in all the straits and anxieties that ye come under. *Prov.* xviii. ult. abundantly clears it; *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly.* And is not this the part of a friend, to sympathize with his friend when he is under very anxious and afflicting dispensations? Know it, O friends, Christ is more afflicted with our corsses than we are afflicted with them ourselves, *Zech.* ii. 8. *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.* Let them but touch the most tender part of *your* body, and they touch the tendereſt part of *his* body.

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Now that which, *thirdly*, I would speak to from this, "That there is such a precious privilege and "royal dignity conferred upon Believers as to be "friends of God," is this; To propose unto you some evidences by which ye may know whether or not ye be friends to God, and God a Friend unto you. And I would obtest you, and charge you in the name of the Master of the feast, that, as ye would not in this your estate of estrangement venture upon this feast of love, you would search yourselves by these.

The *first* evidence of a friend of God is this, A friend's love to Christ is constant; according to that remarkable word, *Prov.* xvii. 17. *A friend loves at all times.* If ye be a friend to Christ, ye will love at all times. There are some whose love to Christ is like the love that *Amnon* had to *Tamar*; it lasted but for a very little, and then it was converted into hatred. If ye take your love by fits, it is a sad and speaking evidence ye are not a friend of God; *A friend loves at all times.* I confess, if Christ should come and search and try our love to him, he would prove us not to love at all times: And Christ will try the reality of your love to him by crosses, he will try it by duties, and he will try it by mercies. He will try the reality of your love to him by *crosses*. As for some, when Christ begins to speak that word, *Take up your cross, and follow me*; Christ and they part at that word, and they never meet again. There are others that Christ tries the reality of their love in *duties*. Sometimes Christ will say to some, *Go and sacrifice thy son, thy only son, whom thou lovest:* And, when they meet with such a command, Christ and they part. Now, no doubt, obedience to all the commands of God is an evidence of real love: But there some who halve their obedience to their Friend Christ. And he will

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try the reality of your love by *mercies* and sweet dispensations, as it were. He will give abundance of things unto thee, that thou mayst be tried whether thou lovest Christ or them best. Now I would ask at you to-day, Is there any of you that hath this mark of a friend, he *loves at all times?* Are ye loving Christ at this time? O, if ye be not loving Christ, it is sad for you to adventure to approach to him.

The *second* evidence of a friend of God is this, He is the person that hath a matchless and high esteem of his Friend. This is clear, *Song* v. ult. *He is altogether lovely. This is my Friend, and this is my Beloved, O daughters of Jerusalem.* If Christ be your Friend, he will be altogether lovely: And as she sings in the 10th verse of that chapter, if Christ be your beloved Friend, ye will sing that song, *He is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand.* Is Christ matchless unto you? is he matchless? If not, it is a token he is not your Friend. I would ask this, Who had your thoughts first to-day? was it Christ that had your thoughts in the morning first to-day? I think it is an evidence that person is a friend to Christ, that can cry out that word, *Psal.* cxxxix. 18. *When I awake, I am still with thee.*

The *third* evidence of one that is a friend of God is this, That every thing that is in Christ will be exceeding lovely to the soul. Is Christ your Friend? there is nothing that is in Christ but it will be lovely, *Song* v. 16. *He is altogether lovely.* Christ's rebukes will be lovely, his challenges will be lovely, his sad dispensations will be lovely, his visits will be lovely: There is nothing that Christ can do, but ye will cry forth, This is lovely; there is not a commandment that Christ can give, but it will be lovely. If you be a friend to him, ye will

cry forth, *I have a respect to all the commandments* of God. Try yourselves by this; if the rebukes of Christ be lovely, if the sad dispensations of Christ be lovely to you, if the commandments of Christ be lovely unto you, that is an evidence Christ is your Friend.

The *fourth* evidence of one that is a friend is this, He is a person that will obey all the commandments of God. This is clear, *John* xv. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* A Christian must be universal in his obedience; that is a friend to Christ. There must not be a duty that a Christian meets with, but he must take it in his arms, and cry out, O *good is the word of the Lord.* If he will not love the duty for itself, yet will he love it because it comes from Christ.

A *fifth* evidence of one that is a friend to the most High is this, If Christ be your Friend, ye will be much in telling him your secrets. There are some things that a Christian will tell Christ, which he will not tell to any in the world; nay, I think it were unlawful for us to tell things to our dearest friends, that we will tell to Christ; he can put the best construction upon our confessions, and every thing we can make known to him. Ay, believe it, it offends your precious Friend, when ye tell him not all your secrets.

A *sixth* evidence of one that is a friend of God is this; Absence from Christ will be your exceeding burden. When *Jonathan* and *David* were to part one from another, they fell upon one another's neck, and *wept, till* David *exceeded:* And when ye and your precious Friend depart one from another, should ye not weep, and exceed in it? And believe it, it is a token Christ was never your Friend, to whom absence with Christ was never your burden.

Ay,

Ay, is not that the kindneſs of a friend, to long to ſee their abſent friend?

The *laſt* evidence of one that is a friend of Chriſt, and is entred into this ſweet and precious bond of relation, is this; Ye will be taking delight to walk and converſe with Chriſt. It is ſaid of *David* and *Jonathan*, *Their ſoul was knit together.* If Chriſt were your Friend, and ye were a friend to him, there would be nothing ſo pleaſant unto you as to be walking all along with Chriſt. If Chriſt were your Friend, ye would be crying out, *Let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth, for his love is better than wine.*

The *fourth* thing that we would ſpeak to upon this is, To point out to you theſe three remarkable times in which it is of much ſoul-concernment to have Chriſt our Friend.

And the *firſt* time, when it is of much concernment to have Chriſt our Friend, is, when a Chriſtian is put under moſt ſad, anxious and afflicting croſſes. It is much of a Chriſtian's concernment to have Chriſt his Friend, when he is put to propoſe his complaint; *Friend and brother and kinſman haſt thou put far from me.* But yet that ſoul may comfort itſelf with this, Chriſt is my Friend. If a Chriſtian could ſit down and ſay, I am *reproached*, yet I comfort myſelf with this, Chriſt is my Friend; I am in *poverty* and ſtraits, yet I comfort myſelf with this, Chriſt is my Friend; I am *poſſeſſing nothing*, yet I comfort myſelf with this, Chriſt is my Friend; I am put to *wander in dens and caves of the earth*, yet I comfort myſelf with this, Chriſt is my Friend; I am put to endure the trial of *cruel mockings*, yet I comfort myſelf with this, Chriſt is my Friend.

The *ſecond* time, when it is of much ſoul-con-

think, there were some that, at the last communion they were at, did contract something that, belike, they will not shake off upon this side of eternity. Ay, know it, a Christian may contract as much estrangement and distance from Christ at a feast of love, as he will make up while he is in this side of time: Ye shall never win so near Christ again, till ye win up to the higher house, if at this feast of love ye contract estrangement with Christ. Therefore *take heed to your feet*, when ye go to sit down with Christ.

A *second* consideration, that I would propose unto you that are to sit down to feast with your Friend, is this; O have high thoughts of Christ in the day of love, and in the day of his feasting with us; have high thoughts of him. Is it not most unsuitable to have low thoughts of Christ in the day of his coronation? is it not unsuitable to have low thoughts of him in the day when he *brings us to the banqueting-house, and his banner over us is love?* Know it, the person that would sell Christ for thirty pieces of silver, is not a person that should approach to the feast of love: Therefore study to bring your hearts swelling with high, stately and majestick apprehensions of the Master of the feast. In a manner, when ye sit down, ye may begin to wonder at the condescending love of Christ, and speak that word which *Mephibosheth* spoke to *David* when he was set down at table with the king, *What am I, that I should eat bread with the king?* I think, if we saw him, we would be afraid to approach to him.

The *third* consideration, that I would propose to you that would approach to feast with your Friend, is this; By all means endeavour to have clearness concerning your interest in this Friend. Know, that

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it is much of your concernment to be knowing that Christ indeed is your Friend. Ye will win to it by the testimony of the Spirit, or ye will win to it by faith, or ye will win to it by holy reason, or ye will win to it by sense, or ye will win to it by evidences; but, however, be much in requesting the King for this, that ye may see a sight of your name written in the book of life, before ye come to this precious feast of love.

A *fourth* consideration that I would propose to you that are to feast with your Friend, is this; That you would study not only to have your state cleared, but to be in a good and spiritual frame of spirit: If ye would feast with your Friend Christ to-day, study to have a spiritual and excellent frame of spirit. I would only say this, There are *eight* sorts of frames of spirit, which if ye come with, Christ will not regard you, and I would desire ye would examine yourselves whether ye be under any of these frames. There is, *1st*, a legal frame of spirit, that is unfit for eating and drinking with Christ. I call that a legal frame, a frame not withdrawn from the covenant of works. Some will not trust upon their works, but they will trust upon their duties, and upon their graces. I say to that person, be who thou wilt, If thou have a legal frame of spirit, approach not to Christ's table to-day. A *second* frame of spirit, which Christ will not regard, is a presumptuous frame. A Christian that will go about this ordinance upon his own strength, that will sit down and eat and drink with Christ upon his own strength; that is a frame that Christ will reject, and say to that person, *Friend, how camest thou hither?* *3dly*, There is this frame of spirit, that wants an errand; that is a frame that Christ will reject. Christ will ask that question at you, What is your errand?

And, if ye be under such a frame of spirit that ye have not an errand, I would say unto you, Do not venture to come. There is, *4thly*, a confused frame of spirit, and that is not fit for the Lord's table. Hence it is, that in 1 *Cor.* xi. 28. it is required of us before we come to the feast of love, that we should search and *examine ourselves*. We should have clear discoveries of our own condition before we come. There is that *fifth* frame of spirit that is not fit for the table of the Lord, and that is an untender and hardned frame. Is it not the work of the day, to mourn over him whom we have pierced? and, if thou have an untender and hardned frame of spirit, it is a speaking evidence this will not be to thee *a feast of fat things full of marrow*. There is that *sixth* frame of spirit that is not fit for such a precious ordinance, and it is an unmortified frame of spirit. The person that hath his idols lying between his breasts, whose whoredoms make him to depart from God; that person is not fit for such a solemn ordinance. There is that *seventh* unfit frame of spirit, and it is the frame that hath not love in it; that is, the frame that is not loving Christ, that is an unsuitable frame. O but Christ may speak that word unto you which *Isaac* spoke to *Abimelech*, *Gen.* xxvi. 27. *Wherefore come ye to me, since ye hate me, and have put me away from you?* O what if Christ shall speak unto you, How can ye come unto me, since ye hate me, and have put me away? The *last* sort of frame of spirit that is unfit for this ordinance, is the heart that is not at all prepared for this precious ordinance. There are some of us that are here (we may speak without breach of charity) we suppose we doubt much if we took a quarter of an hour's more pains to pre-

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pare our hearts to this precious ordinance, than we do at other times. There is not any that slight preparation, but it is a speaking evidence of their undervaluing of Christ. We shall only name the rest of the considerations, and close.

There is this *fifth* consideration that I would propose unto you, and it is this; There are many persons that think they are in a suitable frame to partake of this ordinance, and yet no doubt they are in a desperate frame. There are some that examine their condition by the letter of the law, and cry out, I am blessed: This was *Paul*'s way, I am (cries he out) *concerning the law blameless*, and he was *alive with the law*. They examine their condition by the letter of the law. Others examine their condition by the peace of conscience that they have. Some, if they have peace of conscience, think all is well: Some judge of their condition by the bulk of outward duties, as that man, *Luke* xviii. 11, 12. *I thank God, I am not like this man; I fast twice a week*, &c. Some examine their condition by the walk of others; and, if they see themselves in outward things above them, they sit down, and bless themselves. I would say to you, ye that are embracing such a delusion, Take heed lest ye meet with a snare.

There is that consideration likewise that we would propose, and it is this; That a Christian may be in an exceeding good frame for feasting with Christ, and yet he may suppose himself to be in a very bad frame. Christians mistake their condition and frame, by judging it according to the rule of dispensations: If dispensations speak bitter things to us, we sit down and conclude sad things against ourselves, and sit down, and cry out, *To which of*

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the saints shall I go? and, *if I call, there is none that would answer me.*

The *last* consideration that I would propose unto you is this; Ye are now invited to come to this solemn feast of love; know it, that it may be a day of sad remembrance to many: Ay, give me leave to say it, We look not like feasters with Christ. I think, if a stranger, that knows not what we are meeting for to-day, would come in and look to us all round about, he might cry out, There is no communion here to-day. Doth not *the shew of our countenances testify against us?* O are there any that have seen the Master of the feast to-day? are there any that have beheld the *goings of him in the sanctuary?*

SERMON V. *

An Exhortation to Perseverance.

Jude, *ver.* 21.

Keep yourselves in the love of God.

IF precious Christ should propose that question to some of us, which once he did to *Peter*, *Lovest thou me?* I suppose there are few within these doors that could upon solid and spiritual grounds return *Peter*'s answer to the question, *Thou knowest that I love thee.* The grace of love is a royal and tender

* Preached at a Fast before a Communion.

der plant, that cannot well grow in our untender hearts. The love of many that are within these doors is like *Jonas'* gourd, it *springs up in a night, and perishes in a night*; our love is *like the early cloud, and the morning-dew, that quickly doth evanish*: If so we may speak, in a manner, we love Christ to-day, and we hate him to-morrow. I would only say this to you; O that the divine and precious excellencies of the grace of love were known, that ye might be provoked not only to pursue after it, but also to keep it, when ye have attained to it! The grace of love hath three great questions which it doth propose; 1st, *What wilt thou have me to do?* Love desires no more but to have its orders from Christ, and it will not despise his commandments. A 2*d* question of the grace of love in a Christian is this, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits unto me?* Love is a grace that is oft-times put to a nonplus, it cannot tell what it should render unto God for all his gifts and precious donations of favour which he hath given. A 3*d* precious question of love is this, *Saw ye him whom my soul loves?* a question not very rife in these days; which speaks that love is dying within us, and drawing towards its grave. Now, tho' love hath three questions, yet it hath but one desire, which you will find in *Psal.* xxvii. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord, and enquire* after him *in his holy temple.*

I shall, before I come to the words, only desire you to take notice of these two things; 1*st*, That there are many mistakes in sundry Christians concerning this noble and excellent grace of love: There is nothing we have so much in profession as love, and yet there is nothing we have less in practice and reality

reality than love. In a manner, *hatred to Christ* may be ingraven with great letters upon the walk and converſation of many of us. There is that, *2dly*, that I would ſay; He is eternally made up, that hath gotten the precious grace of love. O Chriſtians, love will be your eternal companion: Faith will leave you, hope will leave you, repentance will leave you, mortification will leave you, and patience will leave you, when ye enter in within the gates of that city; but that noble and excellent grace of love will walk in through the gates to the city with you. The day is coming when ye ſhall ſpeak that word, which a holy man ſpoke being near death; *Now farewel faith, farewel hope, and welcome O love.*

Now, to come to the words, the great ſcope of the apoſtle in this epiſtle is to guard thoſe to whom he wrote againſt apoſtaſy and defection: Not only againſt a doctrinal apoſtaſy from Chriſt, that they ſhould *hold faſt the profeſſion of their faith without wavering*, and *contend earneſtly for the truth*; but he deſires to guard them againſt practical apoſtaſy from Chriſt; that what they had once win to, they ſhould ſtudy to keep. There is no leſs Chriſtian policy required in keeping, than in attaining; there is as much Chriſtian diligence to be uſed to keep, as to attain our graces. Among the reſt of the precious means that he hath preſcribed, by which they might win to a divine ſtedfaſtneſs, this is one, *Keep yourſelves in the love of God.* By the love of God here, we do not ſo much underſtand theſe ſweet emanations of love, and the manifeſtations of it, that are upon God's part; as we underſtand the love that a Chriſtian hath to God, that they ſhould earneſtly and vigorouſly deſire to keep. For ye would know, love may be either taken in a paſſive

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sense, as it points out these sweet flowings out and emanations of love from the heart of Christ, which terminate upon the Christian; or it may be taken in an active sense, as it points out these sweet and excellent actings of love that are in the soul of a Christian, that terminate and are fixed upon precious Christ. And by keeping themselves in the love of God, is pointed out their endeavouring to persevere and hold fast the love they have attained, and withal that they should pursue and earnestly contend for more. We may say (as it were) he desires them to keep within this excellent palace of the love of God; it is one of the most excellent mansions and places of abode that we can have.

Now ye may take notice of these four things from the words, which we shall shortly speak to: The first is this, *That the grace of love in a Christian is incident and liable to apostasy and decay.* A Christian is prone to nothing so much as this, to make defection and apostasy in the precious grace of love. Love is a tender thing; it must either be well kept, or else it will be lost: We must keep the grace of love as the apple of our eye.

The second doctrine ye may take notice of from the words is this, *That it is a duty most incumbent upon a Christian to study to hold fast and keep his love.* The word, that is here rendred *keep*, imports, according to its force in the original, for one to keep a thing diligently as with watch and ward, that they should have a diligent inspection to, and care lest they lose the precious jewel love.

The third doctrine ye may take notice of from the words this is, *That there is much everlasting and unspeakable soul-advantage that lies hid in the practice of this duty of keeping yourselves in the love of God.* This we take notice of from the scope, in which

which the apostle prescribes this as an excellent remedy to guard against apostasy. O Christians, would ye go to heaven without a fall? go all along your way to heaven travelling in the chariot of love. Ay, when love is at a decay, it will make your garment contract many unseemly-like spots. Would ye know what a loving Christian is? he is a Christian that hath two heavens, he hath a heaven upon earth, and a heaven when he hath done with earth. Would ye know where the loving Christian's heart is? it is in heaven. Would ye know where the loving Christian's conversation is? it is in heaven. Would ye know where the loving Christian's treasure is? it is in heaven. Would ye know where the loving Christian's hope is? it is in heaven. Would ye know where the loving Christian's eyes are? they are in heaven. I know not what of a loving Christian is out of heaven, but this lumpish tabernacle of clay, that cannot inherit incorruption till it be made incorruptible: But a soul that is burning in love, is a soul in heaven; according to that expression, "The soul is more where it loves, than where "it lives."

The last doctrine I take notice of from the words is this, *That there are many temptations and assaults that a Christian meets with, the great design and intent of which is to rob and deprive him of this excellent jewel, love.* This we conceive is pointed out in that word, *keep:* Not only in the exhortation, *Keep yourselves in the love of God,* which doth presuppose there are many enemies; but also the force of the word in the original signifies as much as supposes a diligent keeping of that which is in hazard to be taken away and lost: Keep as with watch and ward; for there are ten thousand temptations at your right hand, and ten thousand temptations at your left

the reason thou wouldst put God to destroy the mercy he hath given thee? I shall only give you these two grounds, that by your not performing of vows, or not setting about the performance of them, the mercy received, which was the occasion that these vows were past to God, proves to be a notable curse. 1*st*, That mercy is the mother of much presumption and pride. Let a mercy be received upon vows, and a Christian not set about the performance of these vows, he shall sit down and sacrifice to his own net; and from this it proves a remarkable curse. A 2*d* ground of it is this; A mercy received upon vows, and we not setting about the accomplishment of them, it makes that mercy to be the mother of security. I think there is much sad and woful laziness that hath been the fruit of such a mercy. A *fourth* disadvantage that attends the breach of vows is this; It doth exceedingly interrupt the quiet and peace of conscience that a Christian should have. O but the breach of covenants and vows makes a Christian to have his way to heaven wearisom! O but we might have sweet ways to heaven! but, in a manner, there is not a step of our way to heaven, but our conscience checks us. Would ye have peace of conscience, O Christians? then study to perform your vows. A *fifth* disadvantage that attends the breach of vows is this; That it doth exceedingly interrupt the exercise of love, that it doth exceedingly interrupt the exercise of faith, and the exercise of diligence. O but the breach of vows will make a bad understanding between God and you! the breach of vows will put such a jealousy between Christ and you, as will not be taken off for many days. The *last* disadvantage that attends the breach of vows is this; It will make thy departing sad and driery, if thou be a Christian. I have known that some most tender Chri-

Christians, when they have been looking eternity in the face, there was nothing that troubled them so much as the breach of vows. O how many precious covenants have we broken! how many precious communion-vows have we broken! how many excellent resolutions have we broken! Ye that are much in the breaking of vows, I would say that word unto you, If at all ye shall be saved, it shall be *so as by fire.*

Thirdly, We would propose the following considerations, in order to induce Christians to pay their vows.

The *first* consideration is; Christians, I would have you paying your vows without delay, because this is commanded, *Deut.* xxiii. 21. *When thou vowest a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it.* And, *Eccl.* v. 5. *Defer not to pay thy vows.* And here it was the practice of *David, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.* I would say this unto you, Christians; After the receipt of your mercies, strive to pay your vows. I will give you these three or four grounds of it; 1*st*, A Christian hath biggest thoughts of his mercy immediately after it is received; and so it helps to the performance of your vows, because your heart bulks most with the mercy then. 2*dly*, A Christian, immediately after the receipt of mercies, is in the most suitable temper for performing his vows to God; he is in a suitable temper immediately after the receipt of mercies: Ay, then, a Christian moves as the chariots of *Ammi-nadib.* A 3*d* ground of it is this; That a Christian will think best of the performing of his vows immediately after the receipt of mercies, when the thoughts of the mercy are growing big within him. If we then perform our

vows and resolutions, it will not seem much in our eyes; but, if we perform our vows twenty days after the receipt of the mercy, one to a hundred if we grow not proud. A *4th* ground of it is this; If a Christian delay to perform his vows, one to a hundred if ever he perform them. I think, delays of the performance of vows is a breach of vows. Heard ye never that word, *Delays are dangerous?* and indeed delays of performing the vows of God are most dangerous.

A *second* consideration is this; Christians, comfort yourselves with this; your resolutions, purposes and vows ly within a promise. Ye may say, How will I win to pay my vows unto God? Your vows, your resolutions, your purposes, ly within a promise, they ly within the bosom of a promise. This is clear, *Isa.* xix. 21. It is said of *Egypt*, they shall *vow, and perform their vows unto the Lord.* And, *Job* xxii. 27. *Thou shalt vow, and perform thy vows; thou shall decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee.* We think, the doubling of the promise, speaks the certainty of the thing, *and it shall be established.* There is not a covenant, not a purpose nor resolution that we have, but it lies in the bosom of promises. Christ (as it were) *nolens volens* leads you to the performance of it.

A *third* consideration that I would propose is this; That a Christian should by all means study to have his resolutions commended to Christ. There is not a resolution ye have, O Christians, but this should be the prayer ye would pray unto Christ with it, *O precious Christ, breathe upon this resolution.* I confess, it is a noble art of Christianity, to do all in the strength of Christ. We commit our persons to Christ; this is ordinary, and O that it were more ordinary! but know ye what this is, to commit our graces

graces to Christ, to commit our duties to Christ, to commit our resolutions to Christ, to commit our convictions to Christ? There is nothing that ye have, but you should commit it to Christ; he is the surest hand to which ye can commit them. Ay, commit your gifts to Christ, they will be best kept there; make him the place of refuge, where all thy strength lies.

A *fourth* consideration, that I would propose to you, is this; Christians, when ye are in a tender frame, beware of resolving according to your extraordinary frame, but resolve according to your ordinary frame. Is not this known, when a Christian is near God, he takes on big resolutions? But I would say this word unto you, *Isa.* li. 1. *Look unto the hole of the pit whence ye were digged, and to the rock whence ye were hewen.* Christians, resolve by your ordinary frame, and not by the rule of your extraordinary frame: Be very sober in your resolutions; as it were, never resolve without asking Christ this question, O Christ, shall I resolve this?

There is this *fifth* consideration that I would propose to you Christians that are here; I charge you in the name of Christ, who is the Master of the feast that ye were called unto, do not delay the accomplishment of your vows. Christ may speak that word unto you at the next communion ye go to, Where is the performance of your vows made at *Glasgow*'s last communion? I confess, it will make you to feast with much bitterness, when ye have nothing to say when ye are thus reproved. I would say that word, *Prov.* xxvii. 1. *Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* May we not all be in our grave ere a day go about?

A *sixth* consideration we would propose unto you is, To state some differences between a Christian's re-

resolutions and a hypocrite's resolutions; for a hypocrite may resolve most strongly. There is much difference between a hypocrite's resolutions and bonds that he takes on, and these excellent *cords of love* that a Christian takes on. The *1st* difference between the resolutions of a hypocrite and the resolutions of a Christian is, A Christian oft-times (I will not say alway) resolves upon the strength of another person than himself; but a hypocrite, I think, resolves always on his own strength. Ay, says the Christian, If Christ were not in heaven, I would never have resolved; but says the hypocrite, If Christ were out of heaven, I would have resolved. But know this, *without Christ ye can do nothing*. It were good to go to communions with this, it were good to go to prayer with this, it were good to go to conference with this, it were good to go to the streets with this, it were good to go to the meanest duty of religion that is required of you with this, *Without Christ I can do nothing*. A *2d* difference between the resolutions of a Christian and a hypocrite is this; I think, the breach of communion vows and resolutions never affects a hypocrite's conscience, it is never the matter of a hypocrite's *washing his bed with his tears:* But there is nothing will affect the heart of a tender Christian so much as the breach of communion-vows; these will affect his heart exceedingly. I would say this to you, ye that never groned under the breach of communion vows and resolutions; Ye are either an exquisite Christian, or an exquisite hypocrite. I tell you three sins that a hypocrite never mourned for; there is original sin, and there is the sin of unbelief, and there is the sin of abusing the Lord's table: These are three invisible sins, that we think a hypocrite never wins to mourn for. It is impossible for a hypocrite to win to mourn for original

ginal sin; I doubt much if he wins to the conviction of it in seriousness. Did ever any of these three sins affect your heart? I would say that to you that were never affected with any of them; Ye may go back and weep over the foundations, and say, Alas for the day that I began to pray and profess! A 3*d* difference between the resolutions of a Christian and the resolutions of a hypocrite is this; That a hypocrite, in his resolving, never hath his heart wholly taken up about the thing that he resolves; but a Christian sometimes in his resolutions hath his heart much engaged to the thing. A hypocrite resolves more with his light than with his heart; the heart of a hypocrite is never, in his resolving, engaged to the thing that he resolves: But it is love, the constraining, the overpowering, the quickning, the besieging principle of love, that leads the Christian to much divine resolutions. I know, love travails and is big with child of eminent resolutions. Sometimes love will make a Christian to resolve upon impossibilities; as *John* xx. 15. *If thou hast born him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, that I may take him away.* It was impossible for her, a poor weak woman, to carry in her arms a dead man's body; but love made her to say it. Love consults more with its duty than with its own strength. A 4*th* difference between the resolutions of a hypocrite, and one that is really godly, is this; A hypocrite, in his resolving, is not constant: A hypocrite is a most inconstant creature in his resolutions; he will resolve to-day, and he will break to-morrow. But a Christian will win to some stedfastness sometimes, not always, in his resolutions. O are there not many here that may lament that word, *My purposes are broken off*, my love-purposes and my affliction-purposes are broken off! Sometimes God hath holy

designs in not giving us strength to perform our resolutions; according to that word, *Job* xxxiii. 17. *He withdraws man from his purposes, that he may hide pride from his eyes.* Sometimes, if we could win to do the thing which we resolved to do, we would grow proud and conceity. It is not every one that can bear the glory of an eminent enjoyment; this is a mystery. Give Christ the burden of your enjoyments to bear. Belive it, publick and eminent enjoyments are a burden which your shoulders are not able to bear; therefore, when ye meet with eminent enjoyments of God, let that be your song, *Not unto me, not unto me, but unto him be the glory of my salvation.* The *last* difference between them, that I shall now mention, is this; A hypocrite in his resolutions seldom or never hath a sweet and precious design: This is almost evermore wrong. He will resolve to be a diligent Christian, that he may be beautified when he comes abroad. A hypocrite will endeavour to mortify such a lust and his idols as far as he can; but it is that he may have peace with his conscience: For I doubt much if a hypocrite be very desirous of peace with God; but peace with my conscience, that is the great design of a hypocrite. But a Christian, in his resolutions, hath always some sweet design and precious butt at which all his arrows are shot.

I shall close our discourse at this time with this; I know, whatever hath been the temper of our spirits, this hath been a resolving time: And I would say this, If a Christian would pay his vows, it would be a precious day, it would be a praising day; hence it is that praise and vows are put together so oft in scripture, they are seldom found separate: In the psalms, thanksgiving and paying of vows are two things that go together. 2*dly*, I would say this; If ye

ye would pay your vows, be much in the exercise of prayer. There is such a sibness between praying and vowing, that the one of them is sometimes pointed out under the notion of the other. *Psal.* lxi. 5. *Thou hast heard my vows, O Lord.* Now, how many sweet knots have ye unlooſed? Even cast one knot before ye go hence out of these doors; tho' in a manner ye cannot keep them fast, study by all means to cast one knot between you and Christ. I doubt much if we will all meet again; only we shall all meet in one place, and that is in the grave: I doubt much if we shall all meet in heaven. I would say this, and close with it; The breach of vows so constantly, and so little mourned for, is an evidence of the want of sincerity. I may allude to that word, if not more than allude to it, *Psal.* xv. 1. compared with *v.* 4. *Who shall abide in the tabernacle of the Lord? he that sweareth, and changeth not.* Is there such a person here, that hath sworn to God, and hath not changed? The many unrepented-of and unmourned-for breaches of our vows are a token we shall not abide in the tabernacle of God, or that we have not the solid hope and expectation of being once with him.

Now even take these three resolutions away with you: Take *Peter*'s resolution away with you to-day, *Tho' all men* and women *forsake precious Christ, yet will not I.* O to take that resolution away, and to take it away with us in sincerity! If Christ should never have one to back him but me, I will back him; I will never loose my grips of precious Christ; death, death shall not separate us; I shall die and Christ in my arms. If ye condescend to do so, go away with that resolution to-day, *Tho' all men should forsake thee, I will not forsake thee.* 2dly, Go away with this resolution, *Psal.* cxvi. 9. *I will walk*

themselves to be *rich*, when they were *poor*. The 3*d* thing, that clears presumption and conceit to be an evil incident to many, is those reproofs that Christ gives unto persons because of this evil: This is remarkably clear, *Luke* xii. 51. *Why judge ye not of yourselves that which is right?* Where Christ reproves persons for this, that they have misconstruing conceptions concerning their own state. 4*thly*, It is clear that mistake and presumption is an evil incident to many, from the many marks and evidences that are given in scripture, by which persons may be helped to try their estate and condition. To what end were all these marks of real grace that are given in scripture, if there were not such a thing too much incident to many, to be presumptuous and conceity?

In prosecuting this somewhat more, I shall speak a little unto four things.

I. I shall speak a little unto some considerations, to press you to guard against presumption and mistake of your own condition; for this is indeed the lot of many, to go down to the pit, and suppose themselves not to be going thither.

The *first* consideration that I shall propose, to press you to guard against mistake and presumption, is this; There are many that are mistaken, and have thoughts of themselves above what they ought; therefore I intreat you guard against mistake. This is clear from that place we cited, *Prov.* xxx. 12. as likewise *Mat.* vii. 29. where it is said, *Many shall come to Christ in that day, and shall say unto him, Lord, Lord*, &c. There are many that, when Christ shall come and judge the world, shall be in a delusion and mistake. If there were but one of a hundred that was mistaken, yet we ought to search: But since it is more than probable, that, where

where there is one that does not miſtake, there are ſix that do miſtake; therefore I intreat you ſearch, leſt God be provoked to ſearch and find out your iniquity.

The *ſecond* conſideration is this; If once a perſon be under miſtake concerning his condition, it is an evil he will not be eaſily driven from; according to that word, *Jer.* viii. 5. *They hold faſt deceit, they refuſe to return:* As it were, they keep the preſumption with both their hands; and, let any man ſpeak what he will unto them, they will go down to their grave with this, *I am in Chriſt.* It is exceeding hard for one, under the power of miſtake, to quit his miſtake.

The *third* conſideration, to preſs you to guard againſt miſtake and preſumption, is this, That it is a great mocking of God; according to that word in the 7th verſe of this chapter, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* As it were, it is a denying of the juſtice and omniſcience of God, for a perſon to live under a miſtake.

The *fourth* conſideration that I would propoſe, to preſs you to guard againſt miſtake, is this; That, of all the evils that are within a perſon's heart, this evil of preſumption and conceit is one of the greateſt; according to that word, *Prov.* vi. 17. *There are ſix things that the Lord hates, yea, ſeven that are abomination to him:* And what is that which leads the van to theſe ſeven things? it is a *proud look.* And now I ſay this unto you, As ye would not make yourſelves hateful in the eyes of the Lord, I beſeech you guard againſt preſumption. There are ſome that ſay, *Stand by, for I am holier than thou; theſe are a ſmoke in his noſtrils, and a fire that burns all the day long.*

The *fifth* conſideration that I ſhall propoſe is this;

The

The person that is in a presumptions frame, it is hard (if not exceeding hard) for him to be converted. There is nothing that hinders the success of the gospel upon many men and womens hearts so much as this, they think they stand not in need of Christ. That is a strange word, *Prov.* xxvi. 12. *A man* (says he) *that is wise in his own eyes, there is more hope of a fool than of him.* And that word, *Isa.* xliv. 20. *There is a lie in their right hand, so that they cannot deliver their soul.* I tell you two sorts of persons that ly furthest off from their conversion by the gospel, the presumptuous person, and the hypocritical person; these two the scripture hath declared to ly furthest off from the stroke of the gospel.

There is a *sixth* consideration to press you to guard against presumption and mistake, and it is this; A mistake concerning yourself in this, is, if ye pass the borders of time, a most anxious and endless mistake. I would have you searching yourselves in this. What a dreadful day will some of those have, that think they are going to heaven, when they shall go down unto those everlasting flames, and shall see their hope hath been but as a spider's web, and as a morning-dream? I confess, it is one of the most sad and lamentable things that can be for any person to be under this evil of presumption and mistake; it is just like unto an ox going with peace to the slaughter.

II. I shall speak a little to these things that are the rise and original of this conceit, presumption and mistake that is in these days.

The *first* rise and original of mistake and presumption is this; Many persons, in judging themselves, take a wrong or false rule to judge themselves by; and so they draw a wrong conclusion

from

from their ſearch and examination. I ſhall ſet before you theſe eight moſt falſe and erring rules by which many perſons judge themſelves.

1*ſt*, Many judge themſelves more by the letter of the law, than by the ſpiritual meaning of the law. This was the rule *Paul* took before his converſion; as is clear, *Rom.* vii. 9. *I was alive without the law.* And, *Phil.* iii. 8. *Concerning the law I was blameleſs.* Now, I ſay, there are ſome who, when they ſit down to ſearch themſelves, take the letter of the law, without the ſpiritual meaning of the law, to be their rule. A perſon may be, concerning the letter of the law, blameleſs unto his apprehenſion; to whom Chriſt ſhall ſay, *Depart, I never knew you.* Ye would know this, the law doth reach not only the outward man, but the inward man alſo. If thou ſhouldſt never commit one act of iniquity, if thou thinkeſt but one evil thought, the law cries forth, *O curſe upon thee.* And I am perſwaded, if many of us that are here would ſit down and judge ourſelves by the ſpiritual meaning of the law, we might be conſtrained to cry out, *Wo is me, I am undone.*

The 2*d* falſe rule, by which ſome judge themſelves, is this; They judge themſelves more by their duties, than by their graces; that is, they judge themſelves more by their work, than they judge themſelves by the quality of their work. Some perſons, if they faſt twice a-week, they think heaven is theirs without all debate. This was the rule by which that man judged himſelf, *Luke* xviii. 11. *I faſt twice a-week, and I pay tithes of all that I poſſeſs*, &c. I ſay, Thou mayſt pray twenty times every day, and yet be a ſtranger unto God, and one that ſhall never ſee his face: And therefore I would ſay this to thee, Judge thyſelf more by thy graces than by thy duties.

The 3*d* false rule, by which some persons judge themselves, is the rule that hypocrites take, and that is, Some judge themselves more by their extraordinary frame, than by their ordinary walk and conversation. Some persons, if ever they have any thing that looks like enlargement, and the visions of God, they will judge themselves by that; and yet their walk and conversation is most dishonourable to God. I say, Whoever would judge themselves aright, they must judge themselves by their ordinary walk and conversation, and not by their extraordinary frame.

The 4*th* false rule, by which some judge themselves, is this; They judge themselves more by the testimony of their conscience, than by the testimony of the law; and that is an erring and false rule. Some persons, if their conscience speak no evil of them, they think all is sure: But I would say this to you, The law hath much to say to you, when your conscience says nothing against you. Some think, peace of conscience, and their silent conscience, is a foundation upon which they may build their eternal blessedness; while perhaps the devil hath taken the tongue out of thy conscience, that it will not speak. And I say this, Tho' thy conscience should cry out, *Peace, peace* unto thee; there may be sometimes such a voice cried unto thee from heaven, *War* and sudden destruction. O do not believe your conscience always.

The 5*th* wrong and false rule, by which some judge themselves, is this (and it is a most ordinary rule) Some judge themselves more by their intentions, than by their practice and endeavour: And so, when we come and tell them, they are such and such; they answer, O sir, I have a good meaning, tho' I can win no further. I say, If thou judgest thyself by thine intentions, thou mayst be under a very

very great miſtake. An atheiſt may judge of himſelf more by his endeavours than by his practice and attainments; but I never thought that a good rule for perſons to judge themſelves more by their reſolutions than by their endeavours and practice. I ſay, If a good meaning and intention could bring a perſon to heaven, then all the ſluggards ſhould be in heaven; for *the ſoul of the ſluggard deſireth, and hath nothing.* And ye would know this, the goſpel and the law require practice, and not intention only.

The *6th* falſe rule, by which ſome perſons judge themſelves, and which is more refined than the reſt, is this; Some perſons judge themſelves more by their gifts than by their graces and practice: But if thou couldſt ſpeak of God like an angel, and couldſt underſtand all the myſteries within this book *, and do not practiſe in ſome meaſure what thou knoweſt, God ſhall ſay unto thee, I know thee not. For what advantage will ye have by the knowledge of all the excellent things of God, if ye bring not forth theſe things to practice? O know it, if knowledge could have brought perſons to heaven, then *Balaam* had been a ſhining ſtar in heaven to-day: Therefore do not judge yourſelves by your gifts and knowledge, but by your graces and practice.

There is this *7th* falſe rule, by which perſons judge themſelves, namely, Some judge themſelves more by human approbation, than by divine approbation. There are ſome that ſay, I have approbation of all the ſaints, and therefore I may conclude I ſhall go to heaven. I ſay to thee, Tho' the approbation of the ſaints may ſometimes have its own weight; yet I am ſure there are ſome in hell, that have had much approbation of the ſaints and excel-

* Probably pointing to his Bible.

lent ones of the earth. But let Christ's testimonial and approbation be the rule by which thou judgest thyself, and do not so much care what men say of thee. O what if all ministers should call you saints, if Christ call you a reprobate; what poor advantage amounts that unto?

The *8th* false and erring rule, by which some judge themselves, is this; They judge themselves by God's outward dispensations. Are there not many that cry out, I thank God, for he hath been good to me all my days; he never afflicted me sore; I had evermore meat and drink and clothes. I say, Thou mayst have all these things in abundance, and yet be a stranger unto God. Do not judge of your estate by God's outward dispensations. What knowest thou but that all thy enjoyments in the world are only as a bone cast to a dog? and what know ye but that all that ye have is only the fatning you to the day of slaughter? I would charge you, and earnestly desire you, that ye would not judge of your estate by the dispensations of God; for these things may have their own mistake. I confess indeed, there are some dispensations of God, that may be a confirmation to a Christian of his peace; but I say this, Let never a Christian make the dispensations of God the rule of his judging of himself.

The *second* ground and rise of presumption and mistake is this; Many persons are not much taken up in the exercise of self-examination; that is the rise of their presumption and mistake, as is clear by comparing the 4th verse of this chapter with the former, where the apostle, to help them to guard against presumption, gives them this direction, *Let every man prove his own work.* I say, Be much in searching thyself by the Lord's rule, and thou shalt win to some distinct discoveries of thyself. I confess,

feſs, there are ſome who have no will to examine themſelves, becauſe of their diſcouragement; and ſome have no will, neither will they ſet about the examination of their own ſtate, becauſe they have paſt a concluſion already: O what need I ſearch? am I not certain of this, that Chriſt is mine? I would only ſay this by the way, We can never be too ſure of our intereſt in him.

The *third* ground and riſe of preſumption and miſtake is this; Many perſons are void of the ſpiritual exerciſe of the grace of faith. There is nothing will help a Chriſtian ſo much againſt preſumption and miſtake, as the ſpiritual exerciſe of the noble grace of faith. This is clear, *Rom.* iii. 27. *By what law* (ſays the apoſtle) *is boaſting excluded? not by the law of works, but by the law of faith.* Faith will exceedingly help a Chriſtian to a humble walking with God.

A *fourth* riſe of conceit and preſumption is this; Perſons not believing theſe two things; 1*ſt*, That all things that they have, they have them of another. 2*dly*, That all things they have are freely given. This is clear, 1 *Cor.* iv. 7. where the apoſtle reproving that fault that was among many, even their *boaſting of thoſe things they had received, as tho' they had not received them*, he ſays, *O man, what haſt thou but it is borrowed?* Therefore I intreat you to walk under the impreſſion of that, and it will keep you humble.

A *fifth* riſe of preſumption, and conceit is this; Many perſons are not much in reflecting upon original ſin and the body of death: That is indeed the thing that is the mother of pride and preſumption. There is an inſtance of this, moſt remarkable, *Rom.* xi. 25. where, ſpeaking of original ſin, the apoſtle ſays, *I would not have you ignorant of this*; and

why so? *left* (says he) *ye be wise in your own conceit.* The want of distinct apprehensions, and a spiritual study, of original sin and the body of death, is indeed the rise of conceit and presumption.

A *sixth* rise of presumption is this; Mens not reflecting upon what they ought to be. If a person would compare his attainments with what he ought to be, it would help him to crush his presumption. This is clear; if a man thinks he knows any thing, he *knows nothing as he ought to know.* Let all thy attainments be laid to the command, and that will help thee to cry out, O how far am I behind!

A *seventh* rise of presumption is; We compare ourselves with those that are more gross, and do not study to compare ourselves with those that are more eminent. Some judge themselves by the walk and conversation of others that are more gross, and therefore cry out, *I thank God, I am not like this man.* This was the ground of that *Pharisee*'s conceit and presumption, *Luke* xviii. 12. he compares himself (as he thought) to an *extortioner and adulterer*, and thereupon cries out, *I thank God*, &c. Now, thou wouldst study to compare thyself more by these that are above thee, than these that are below thee. I would have you taking notice of this; The discouraged Christian compares himself with those that are above him, and the presumptuous Christian compares himself with those that are below him; now this is a fault in both these comparings.

An *eighth* rise of presumption and mistake is this; Persons do not consider and seriously ponder what they will at last be. If once a Christian did seriously ponder that blessed perfection that he is to win

win at, it would make him to have low and undervaluing thoughts of all that he hath win to.

III. Now that which, *thirdly*, I shall speak to shall be this; I shall propose unto you some grounds upon which conceit and presumption doth build itself. And I intreat you search whether or no your conceit and presumption be builded upon such a sandy foundation.

The *first* false ground of it is this, namely, Applause and approbation from men. Nothing is more ready to lift up a Christian's spirit, than to be much applauded and approven by the excellent ones of the earth. I may allude (if not more than allude) to the practice of *Uzziah*, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 14. when his fame spread abroad through the countries, and he became great, *his heart was lifted up*, and he became proud to his own destruction. I confess, I thought it a notable prayer of one who I thought knew his own heart better than the most part of us that are here: He earnestly intreated God thus; *Lord keep me from applause.* Believe it, it is a hard thing to keep low, being applauded; when the wind of applause is high, man is near a shipwreck. It is a question most difficult in Christianity, Whether it be easier for a Christian to bear a cross, or to bear applause? I think this; a person will never be able to bear applause, till once he begin to know that his applause is a burden. There is a strange expression, *Zech.* iv. chap. where, speaking of the building of the temple, he says, Christ *shall bear the glory of it.* Where we may take notice of these two things; *1st*, That applause is a burden. And, *2dly*, It is best and most suitable for Christ's shoulders to bear it. I think it much for a Christian to steal to heaven, and never let one witt he

is going there; ay, and if it were possible not to let his own heart witt he is going there, I think he were blessed. I confess indeed, *a precious name is better than much riches*; but I would say this to thee, Pride doth oft-times rise out of the root of approbation and applause. And I would only say this by the way; There are two great and most erroneous mistakes among Christians, there are two things that are most faulty in their walk: 1. There are some that have never peace in their conscience but when they have approbation and applause; as it were, their peace hangs upon applause. 2. This is faulty in their walk, they think their want of approbation from the saints a matter of exceeding great discouragement. But I say, If all the Christians thou knowest will not own thee, but call thee a hypocrite, thou mayst yet grip to Christ, and take hold of him. That was a strange exercise of faith, *Isa.* lxiii. 15. *Doubtless thou art our Father, tho'* Abraham *be ignorant of us.* I think, it is one of the great mysterious acts of faith, that tho' Christians should condemn us for hypocrites, yet to put a *doubtless* to our faith, and cry out, *Doubtless thou art our Father.*

The *second* bad ground and foundation of presumption is this, to wit, the gift of knowledge, which is ordinarily the ground of mistake and presumption; according to that word, 1 *Cor.* viii. 1. *Knowledge puffeth up.*

There is this, *thirdly*, which is the ground of presumption, even a Christian's self-denial and humility. That may seem strange, that humility should be the ground of conceit and pride; and yet it is no more strange than it is true. Some persons, if they can have no other ground of their conceit, will be conceity of this, that they are humble: And therefore I say, It is hard for a Christian to be mortified

tified to his mortification, and to be humble to his humility, and to be denied to his self-denial, and to be nothing to his being nothing. If pride can have no other root, it will rise out of the root of precious humility.

A *fourth* ground of presumption and conceit are our duties, and the concomitants of our duties. Some are conceity of this, that they are diligent in duties; and some of this, that they have liberty in duties; and some are conceity of this, that they are successful in duties. Now, there are none of these three things that ought to be the ground of presumption or conceit. Thou shouldst not be conceity of this, that thou art diligent in duty, nor of liberty, nor of success in duty. Tho' I confess a Christian will win to this, not to be conceity of his diligence; yet it is hard for him not to be conceity of his liberty.

A *fifth* rise of presumption and conceit is this; Many persons do indeed suppose all is right with them, and this makes them presumptuous. Are there not many that cry forth, *I am, and there is none else besides me*; who are utterly mistaken?

IV. That which, *fourthly*, I shall speak to, shall be to five or six observations concerning conceit and presumption.

The 1*st* observation is this; That it is easier for a Christian to be mortified to his duties, than to his gifts. A Christian will be more easily denied to his diligence than to his knowledge; knowledge is that which makes many to have their heart lifted up in them.

The 2*d* observation concerning presumption is this; That it is easier for a Christian to be mortified to his graces, than to his enlargements. A Christian may be mortified to his humility, to his patience,

to

to his faith, and yet not mortified to his enlargements. I say, It is harder for a Christian to be mortified unto his enlargements, than it is to be mortified to his graces.

The 3*d* observation that I would give you concerning presumption and conceit is this; That it is more easy for a Christian to be mortified to his natural qualifications, than to his religious qualifications.

4*thly*, It is easier for a Christian to be mortified and humble in the time of affliction, than in the time of prosperity; for prosperity is the time when pride doth blossom.

The 5*th* observation concerning presumption and conceit is this; That is is easier for a Christian to be mortified to his surprising enlargements, than to be mortified to his expected and waited-for enlargements: It is easier for a Christian to be mortified to those enlargements that come to him by way of surprise, than it is for him to be mortified to these enlargements to which he can sing that song, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him*, and he hath come unto us.

The 6*th* observation concerning presumption and conceit is this; It is more easy for a Christian to be mortified to his private enlargements, than to his publick enlargements.

I shall shut up our discourse at this time: Only I would wish that I may undeceive many of us, and that we may know how it stands between God and us. I intreat you to search and examine your condition. Are there not many that are here, that put it beyond all question, and say, *Now I am going to heaven?* Now, that ye go not down to the pit with a conceit of the goodness of your estate, I shall point out nine steps that a person may go, and yet not

not win to heaven: And search yourselves whether or no ye have gone beyond these steps.

1*st*, A person may go this length, that he *lacks but one thing* to attain everlasting rest, and yet never come there. Is not that a strange thing, that ye may come that length, that there shall be but one thing wanting, and yet never come to heaven? This is clear from that which is recorded of that young rich man that came to Christ, to whom Christ said, There is but *one thing lacking* to thee. O is not that to be near heaven, and never to come there! Ay, thou mayst be within one step of heaven, and yet never enter within the gates of that city. I shall ask you, and desire you to search yourselves; Are there not many here, that, if they were seriously posed, durst not say that ever they stept one step to heaven? and O then how far are ye short of those persons!

There is a 2*d* step that one may go, and yet never win to heaven; and that is, A person may seek and pursue after heaven, and yet never win there. This is clear, *Luke* xiii. 23. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for* (says he) *many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* Now, is not that a great step? and yet many shall step that step, and not get heaven. Are there not some here, that never knew what it was to seek with earnestness the kingdom of God? I say, thou mayst be a seeker of it, and yet never enter into it. Yea, the word that is rendred to *seek*, in that place, imports to seek with some sort of diligence and earnestness; and yet that person may be shut out of the kingdom of God. And, are ye indeed seekers of it? I say, Ye may be such, and yet be shut out.

The 3*d* step that one may go, and yet not go to heaven, is this; A person may have strong desires after

after eternal life, and yet never win there. If desires and wishes could have brought persons to heaven, *Balaam* had been in heaven; as is clear, *Num.* xxiii. 9. *O that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my latter end might be as his!* Now, I would ask at you, If there be not some of you that not once in a month, yea, not once in a year, will have one serious desire for heaven? I say, Thou mayst have strong desires, and yet be eternally shut out, and never enter there.

A *4th* step that one may go, and yet never inherit those everlasting joys, is this; A person may be admitted to taste of the sweetness and powers of the world to come. I say, Heaven may be made refreshful unto them, and the probable expectation they have that once they shall go there; I say, That may be, and thou never go to heaven: For the *tasting of the powers of the world to come*, is but a common work of the Spirit. Now, I would pose you with this question; Are there not some of us that are here, that, if they would speak the truth, durst not for a world say that ever heaven was sweet unto them? I say, It may be sweet unto thee, and yet thou never be a possessor of it.

The *5th* step that one may go, and yet never go to heaven, and enter into those precious and everlasting mansions, is this; A person may be convinced of the excellency of that state, and of his need of it, and yet be one of those that shall never go to heaven. Are there not some here, that, since ever they had knowledge, had an excellent and strong faith, and yet never knew what it was to stand in need of Christ, and to be convinced of the advantage that flows unto them that close with him? I say, Thou mayst be sensible of thy lost estate, and yet

yet never go to heaven. This is clear in the instance of *Simon Magus*; he is brought to this, that he sees he is *in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*: And, O (says he) *pray for me, that none of those things that ye have spoken befal me.*

The *6th* step that some may go, and not enter into that precious and everlasting rest that is purchased for the saints, is this; Some persons may do many things willingly and gladly when they hear a preaching, and yet those persons never win to heaven. If the doing of many things at preaching's command had brought persons to heaven, then *Herod* had been in heaven. Now I would ask at you, ye that have lived forty, fifty or sixty years under preaching, If for all the commands that ever ye heard, on supposition that ye speak the truth, ye durst say that ever ye obeyed one of them? O what a dreadful account are many of us to make for all that we have heard!

There is this *7th* step likewise that a person may go, and yet never win to heaven, namely, To forsake all for Christ, and to follow him for a while, and yet not be saved: According to that which was said of all the disciples, they *forsook all, and followed Christ*; and *Judas* was one that forsook all his possessions, and yet he was damned. I say, Thou mayst forsake all thy enjoyments in the world for Christ, and yet never win to heaven.

An *8th* step one may go, and yet never win to heaven, is this; A person may sit down and mourn over some sins that he hath been guilty of, and yet that person never win to heaven: For if mourning over some sins had brought persons to heaven, then *Esau* had been in heaven, who mourned for the sin of selling his birth-right; yea, such was the mourning that *Judas* had for selling his Master, when he

he went and hanged himself. Now I would charge you, as ye would not meet with an eternal disappointment, that you do not think yourselves something, when indeed ye are nothing. I confess indeed, it were no small thing for any man to preach you and your hope asunder, if your confidence were truly built upon him that is the eternal *Rock of ages*; but this is certain, there are many of us that are here, whose hope shall be *swept away as a spider's web*, and shall *evanish as a dream, and fly away as a vision of the night*. I would give this advice unto you; O believe not your own heart.

Now, what say you of yourselves? are ye put to this question, O is it I that is under this mistake and delusion? I say, The person that is fartheſt from it will be most ready to ask the question, Is it I? Now, will ye go home and search yourselves, and see how it stands between God and you; and I am sure, if many of us would search ourselves, we would find God is not at peace with us. I will tell you but four errors in the way of many presumptuous persons: 1*st*, Many persons forgive themselves before God forgive them, they pardon themselves for their iniquities before God pardon them: I say, That pardon shall be rent, because it hath been taken out of the court of our erring and deceitful conscience. And, 2*dly*, Many persons are friends with themselves before God be friends with them. 3*dly*, Many persons forget their iniquities before God forget them. There is that *last* fault that is among many; they cry out *peace, peace* to their own heart, when there is nothing to them from God but *sudden destruction*. Are there not some who sing of joy to the souls whom God shall put to eternal sorrow? O search! it is a matter of eternal concernment; for, if once ye pass the borders of time with a *lie in your*

your right hand, there is no hope: And, when ye shall be passing in through the gates of your eternal prison, will ye not be constrained to cry out, O whither is this self-deceiver now going? It is one of the most dreadful and most terrible things that can be, a deceiver of our own selves! Now, do ye think ye are in a mistake? O that many of us could believe that all the faith that ever we had was but presumption! I am perswaded God doth account it so. Now I shall say no more: O do not think yourselves to be something, when indeed ye are nothing.

SERMON IX.

The great Danger of Hypocrisy.

Job xxxvi. 13.

But the Hypocrites in Heart heap up Wrath: They cry not when he bindeth them.

I Am sometimes constrained to think, that many of the Christians of this time shall meet with a dreadful disappointment, whose hope shall *evanish as a dream, and fly away as a vision of the night.* I suppose there are two things that are almost at their height: 1*st*, We suppose hypocrisy was never at a greater height; and, 2*dly*, Presumption was never so abun-

abundant and universal. I desire not to preach much against hypocrisy, lest these that are strangers to God should take advantage: But O! is it not sad, that so many should think they are going to heaven, who by all appearance shall be eternally shut out from the enjoyment of God and the fruition of his face? and are there not many who have the testimony of their consciences that they are going to heaven, to whom I fear Christ Jesus shall say, *Depart, for I never knew you?* I think, hypocrisy did never look so like real godliness in any generation as it doth in this. I confess, reflecting upon that place, the 25th chapter of *Matthew*, might make the most part of professors to stand astonished, that, if there be but ten professors, there are five of them hypocrites. I think it is a duty incumbent upon every one of us, that have a name among the living in *Jerusalem*, to be oft-times asking that question at our own hearts, Am I a foolish virgin? It is known, many lodge Christ in their tongue, that never lodged him in their heart; and many do speak much good of Christ here, that shall eternally curse God hereafter. I shall say that word to you, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for what a man sows, that shall he also reap.* I may also say this to you, If the hearts of some of the professors of this time were painted out on a board, and we were admitted to behold and see what is within them, would we not stand astonished, and wonder, how such a one could take on a profession? Believe it, it is not so easy to be a Christian as the most part of us think it to be. Know it, hell is full of self-deceivers; there are many painted Christians now in hell, that are cursing God night and day.

Now,

Now, to come more particularly to the words: *Elihu*, in the former part of this chapter, hath been setting forth the carriage and advantages of the really godly, under the most sad and most afflicting cross that he can meet with; and, in opposition to that, he comes and points out the case and state of a hypocrite. And in the 13th verse we have three things concerning the hypocrite holden forth; 1*st*, The name and qualification of the hypocrite; he is called *the hypocrite in heart*. Which we conceive points out these three; 1. That one may be a hypocrite, and yet his hypocrisy be hidden and dark, not only to himself, but to others also; and so the meaning of the words may be this, a *secret* and *unknown hypocrite*. Or, 2. It may take in this, namely, a person taking delight in hypocrisy, and approving himself in it; therefore a hypocrite in heart is as much as to say, one that delights and solaces himself in his hypocrisy. Or, 3. A hypocrite in heart points out this, even a hypocrite in his thoughts; that is, there is a contradiction between a hypocrite's expressions and his thoughts, there is a contradiction between a hypocrite's walk and his mind, there is a contradiction between his outward man and his inward man, there is a contradiction between a hypocrite's profession and his practice: So that I think, in short, a hypocrite is a compound of contradictions, and his walk and conversation is but a continued lie unto God. The 2*d* thing concerning hypocrisy in the word is this, That he is a person that *heaps up wrath*; that is the very constant exercise of a hypocrite: Let him be doing what he will, let him go to communions or to fasts, and to secret prayer, and to all the meetings of Christians; this is the very substance of his work, he *heaps up wrath*; that is, every action he goes about is an adding to the cup of the wrath of

the Almighty, which once he shall drink of: For the word which is here rendred *heap*, it may also be rendred he *adds up wrath*; that is, every action he goes about, he doth (as it were) put a drop into the cup of the eternal wrath that he shall drink. The 3*d* thing concerning hypocrisy in the words is the evidence and mark of a hypocrite; and it is in these words, *he cries not when God binds him.* By *binding* is principally understood afflictions; that, under sad and afflicting dispensations, he doth not seriously seek unto God: Which is holden forth in that word, *cry*, which ordinarily in scripture imports a serious seeking unto God in affliction; as if *Elihu* had said, I know a hypocrite may seem to seek unto God in affliction, but he doth not cry unto him. And by *binding*, we conceive, may be understood *desertion* and *bands*; that when they are under bands, and distance from God, they do not cry unto God for all this.

Now there are five things we shall speak a little unto from this verse. The 1*st* is this, *That hypocrisy and dissimulation is a thing incident to many.* This is clearly presupposed. The 2*d* thing that we shall speak to shall be this; *That hypocrisy and dissimulation is a thing which may be hid, not only from the person himself, but also from all others that look upon the person.* This is clearly held forth in that word, *the hypocrite in heart*; that is, the unknown, secret and dark hypocrite. 3*dly*, There is this that we shall take notice of, *That hypocrisy is that wherewith the hearts of some are at certain times solaced and delighted.* This we cleared to be the force of that word, *the hypocrite in heart.* 4*thly*, Ye may take notice of this from the words, *That the constant and perpetual exercise of a hypocrite is*

is to be a heaper up of wrath. Let him be doing what he will, saying what he will, this is the thing he is taken up with, this is his work, he heaps up wrath. And the *last* thing we shall take notice of from the words is this, *That this is an undeniable evidence of hypocrisy, and of one that is under the power of dissimulation, not to cry when God binds him:* That is, under all the straits, and anxieties, and difficulties that he can be put to, he doth not cry to God.

Now, to come to speak a little unto the first of these, *That hypocrisy is a case incident unto many.* I conceive I need not stand long to clear it; I suppose the 23d of *Matthew* doth abundantly clear it, that hypocrisy is a thing that is most rife. There is a word in the 17th chapter of *Isaiah* which speaks this abundantly; *I will have no joy in their young men, nor mercy upon their fatherless and widows; for every one is an hypocrite:* In a manner charging a whole visible church with this fault of hypocrisy. And that word, *Isa.* x. 6. doth yet abundantly clear it, *I will send him against a hypocritical nation.* As if the prophet would said, Hypocrisy is such a rife and predominant evil among them, that they may be called a *hypocritical nation.* And the 25th of *Matthew* clears this to be a thing most rife, where, among these that are professors, there are *five* that are *foolish*, and but *five* that are *wise.* Now, in speaking to this, I shall speak a little to those three, which will be the foundation to the rest of our discourse.

First, We shall speak a little unto this, What hypocrisy is? And we conceive, hypocrisy is that by which a man desires to appear to be that which really he is not, and desires not to appear to be what

really he is. Hypocrisy, in short, is this, for a man to be a Christian in his tongue, and an atheist in his heart. But, that we may a little more clear the nature of hypocrisy, I shall point out these ten or eleven steps in which hypocrisy doth stand, all which may be undoubted marks of one that is a hypocrite.

The 1*st* thing wherein hypocrisy stands is this, When a person hath this as the end of all his actions, *to be seen of by men*; when a person is more covetous, when he prays, to be seen of men, than to be seen of God; according to that word, *Mat.* xxiii. 5. *All their works are to be seen of men*; and *Mat.* vi. 2. *Be not as the hypocrites, which sound a trumpet before they do alms, that they may have glory of men.* So, I say, look what is thy end of doing duty. And I would pose your consciences with this; Is it not the great end of the most of our duties, to be seen of men? I would say to that person that word, *Mat.* vi. 1. *Take heed ye do not your alms to be seen of men*. I confess, there are some of us, when we are doing any thing that is good, we cry out, *O come and behold my zeal for the Lord.* It is to be suspected, that, if some of the professors of this time were sent to live upon the top of a mountain, they would leave their profession behind them. This is our woful evil, we go about the most part of our duties to satisfy our natural conscience, or else to be seen of men. Now, is there any person here that is not guilty of this step of hypocrisy? do ye not sometimes go to prayer to be seen of men? do ye not sometimes go to communions to be seen of men? I shall say no more to this step of hypocrisy but only this, *Ye shall have your reward.*

There is this, 2*dly*, in which hypocrisy doth stand, namely, When a person is more taken up in

in the love of publick than private duties. Are there not some persons that will pray six times when they are in company, that will not pray once when they are alone? Yea, will we not pray twenty times with delight when we are in company, when we will not pray once with delight being alone? according to that word, *They love to pray in the publick places of the streets*; it is not said of these persons, They love to pray in secret. I say to that person, Be afraid thy religion be but a fancy. I never loved publick religion, that is, religion altogether in publick, and not at all alone. There are some professors in publick, that are atheists when they are alone. I wonder that some of us, when we go to prayer, do not meet with such a voice from heaven, Arise, sir, why dost thou *lie unto the holy Ghost?* I say more; Let thy religion be more in secret than in company, or thou shalt never have a reward. I think that word, *Eph.* v. 13. is a strange word, and is applicable to the most part of us that are here; *It is even a shame to speak of those things that are done by them in secret.* *Paul*, writing even to them that had a profession, says, It were a shame to tell those things they do when they are alone. If the stones of the walls of our secret chambers could speak unto us, they would tell us, that we exercise not ourselves unto godliness.

A 3*d* step of hypocrisy is this, for a person to be more taken up in the pursuit of outward than inward holiness, to be more taken up with outward conformity to the letter of the law, than inward conformity to the spiritual meaning of the law. This is an eminent step of hypocrisy, as *Mat.* xxiii. 26, 27, 28, 29. where Christ especially reproves this fault; Some (says he) are *painted tombs*, that *within are full of dead mens bones*; and some are such

as *cleanse the outside of the platter, but within it is full of hypocrisy and uncleanness.* And likewise this is a mark of hypocrisy, *Mat.* vii. 15. *They come to you in sheeps clothing, but within they are ravening wolves.* Now, are there not many of us that study much to have our outside without spot, that never study to have our inside so? are there not many of us who have *Jacob*'s voice, and *Esau*'s hands? are there not many of us who concerning the letter of the law are blameless, and concerning the spiritual meaning of of the law we are gross breakers of it? But O, since God is one that doth behold the secrets of the heart, be not content with outside holiness. I think, there is as much difference between a hypocrite and a real Christian, as is between a painted man and a real man: A painted man hath all the parts of a real man, but he wants the life of a man; so a hypocrite hath all the parts of a Christian, but wants the life of a Christian.

I will tell you five sorts of persons whom Christ will reject:

1*st*, Those who keep their tongue with all diligence, and do not keep their heart with all diligence. Some there are who will not speak iniquity, but they *practise iniquity to work hypocrisy.* I say, If a man do not keep his heart as well as his tongue, he shall be nothing. Many persons speak that of Christ which they believe not; yea, some have gone to that length of impiety, as to speak good of Christ with their tongue, and hate him in their heart. I shall say no more to that person but this word, *Prov.* xxvi. *He whose hatred is covered with deceit, his iniquity shall be preached in the congregation.* Is there a person whose hatred of Christ is covered with a profession? I say, That person's iniquity shall be preached before the whole congregation. The day is approaching,

proching, when the person that is not a real lover of Christ shall meet with this reproach; *Lo, this is the man that made not God his refuge.* I think, God is yet to sift us with a sieve that is smaller than any we have met with: I intreat you therefore search yourselves, for the day is approaching when none shall be able to bide the storm but those that are builded upon the rock. I fear the day is coming, when *Scotland*'s trial shall cast many fleeces of professors: Therefore I intreat you to be as much Christians in heart as in tongue.

The 2*d* sort of persons, whom Christ will reject, are such as divide the law; that is, they are first-table Christians but not second-table Christians; they love the works of holiness at least to appearance, but they hate the works of righteousness; such as these persons that are made mention of, *Hos.* vi. 6. they love sacrifice better than mercy, and burnt-offerings better than compassion. There are some who love the first table of the law better than the second. O such a person as pretends to love God, and hates his neighbour, that is a religion which was never approven of God; and therefore, if ye would be persons approven of God, divide not the law.

The 3*d* sort of persons, whom Christ will reject, are Christians that divide the gospel; and there are many such Christians in those days. Some will embrace the promises of the gospel, but they will cast at the commands of the gospel: Like those that believed in Christ, and yet cried out, *This is a hard saying, who can hear it?* John vi. Thou shalt never be a Christian approven of God, if thou embrace not the commands as well as the promises. Some Christians do embrace the promises before they believe the threatnings; that Christian's religion is weak.

The *4th* sort of Christians, whom Christ will also reject, are these who are for dividing Christ; those he will reject. I mean this; Some Christians will take Christ for *righteousness*, that will not take him for *sanctification*; some Christians will take Christ for *wisdom*, that will not take him for *redemption*. But know it, there shall none get Christ, but these who will be content to take whole Christ. I would ask that question at you which *Paul* spoke, *Is Christ divided?* And will ye not take whole Christ? for what hath he, which is not necessary for us?

The *5th* sort of Christians whom Christ will reject, and who shall not be approven of him, are visible Christians, that is, those that are Christians abroad, and are not Christians at home; these are persons whom Christ will not approve.

A *4th* thing, in which hypocrisy doth stand, is this, for a person to be more taken up in pursuit after the approbation and applause of men, than after the approbation and applause of God; that is an eminent step of hypocrisy. This is clear from *Mat.* xxiii. 7, 8, 9. and from *John* xxii. 44. where it is said, *They love the praise of men more than the praise of God.* I would pose your consciences with this; Are there not many here, who have been a hundred times more affected with the approbation of a minister or Christian, than with the approbation of God? are there not many who *love the praise of men more than the praise of God?* I trow, if some of us were searched, we would rather have Christians speaking good of us, than Christ speaking good of us.

The *5th* step of hypocrisy is this, for a Christian to be exercised in the doing of some duties, and yet slighting some more substantial duties of the gospel; this

this is an evidence and mark of hypocrisy: This is clear, *Mat.* xxiii. where the hypocrite is charged with this, that *he pays tithe of mint, anise and rue, and leaves the weightier matters of the law undone, as judgment and mercy.* The same is made mention of, *Luke* xi. 24. *They pay tithe of mint and anise, and yet neglect faith and love, and those weightier matters of the law.* I tell you four of the duties the hypocrite is most taken up with; there is the duty of prayer, the duty of keeping publick ordinances, the duty of reading, and the duty of keeping the conversation without spot; these are the four great duties in which the diligence of hypocrites doth vent: But as for the duty of *self-examination*, and the duty of *keeping the heart with all diligence*, and *exercising* themselves *unto godliness*, those are the duties the hypocrite is not at all taken up with.

The *6th* thing, in which hypocrisy doth stand, is for persons to *strain at gnats, and to swallow camels.* I tell you three things a hypocrite will exceedingly strain at: 1. An oath, he will exceedingly strain at that; 2. He will exceedingly guard against giving offence unto any that are religious; and, 3. He will study to guard against the neglect of publick duty: And yet there are camels that he will swallow, and not strain at them.

There is this, *7thly*, in which hypocrisy doth stand, namely, for a person to be much taken up in censuring the small faults of others, and neglecting their own that are more gross; according to that word, *Mat.* vii. *O hypocrite, take first the beam out of thine own eye*, &c. There are some persons that can see their neighbour's faults better than their own. It is reported of a certain beast, that it can see none within, but it can see excellently without. I think, a Christian ought to be like those cherubims that

are

are recorded, 2 *Chron.* iii. 13. *Their faces were inward*, they looked that way.

8*thly*, Hypocrisy stands in this, for a person to be more taken and affected with the loss of approbation from men, than of God's approbation. I would ask you, Are there not some here, that the loss of approbation from a Christian hath affected them more with sorrow than ever the loss of approbation from God did?

The 9*th* step of hypocrisy is, for persons to be more studious to inlarge their profession and appearance, than to inlarge their practice and work. There are some persons, whose great work it is to inlarge their profession, and to make their name conspicious; but, as to the bettering their practice, they are strangers to that. That is a strange word, *Mat.* xxiii. 5. *They make broad their phylacteries, and the hems of their garments*; that is, they make broad their profession. There are some persons more covetous to be seen to be followers of Christ, than really to be so.

There is this, *lastly*, in which hypocrisy doth stand, even this, for a person to have a constant contradiction between their light and their practice. This is clear, *Mat.* xxiii. 3. where Christ says, *Do as they bid you do; but do not as they do: For they say, and do not.* I confess, there is in hypocrisy a six-fold contradiction: 1*st*, There is a mighty contradiction between a hypocrite's light and his practice; for he knows many things that he never sets about to do. 2*dly*, There is a mighty contradiction between his profession and his practice; he professes one thing, and he practiseth another. 3*dly*, There is a contradiction between his walk when he is alone, and his walk when he is in company. 4*thly*, There is a contradiction between his outward and his inward man,

man. *5thly*, There is a contradiction between his desires and his endeavours; for sometimes a hypocrite may have excellent desires, but seldom or never hath he excellent endeavours. *Lastly*, There is a mighty contradiction in a hypocrite between his tongue and his heart.

Now that which, *secondly*, I shall speak to is this; I would clear a little unto you, that it is your duty to guard against hypocrisy. *Luke* xii. 1. *Take heed of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.* The word, that is there rendred *take heed*, imports so much; *First* of all, Take heed (as it were, this is the *imprimis* of a Christian's duty) to guard against hypocrisy. And I shall say no more, to press this to be your duty, but this; I think those great and everlasting woes that are pronounced against hypocrisy, in the 23d chapter of *Matthew*, speak this, It is your duty to guard against hypocrisy.

Thirdly, I shall point out to you three sorts of hypocrisy. *1st*, There is a hypocrisy which is consistent with real grace; for ye would know this, every thing that is done in hypocrisy doth not make a Christian a hypocrite as to his state. I confess, if this were taken notice of, that every act of hypocrisy doth not give a Christian sufficient ground to call himself a hypocrite, we might reprove hypocrites with more advantage. This is clear from the 3d chapter of *Galatians*, where *Peter*, *James* and *Barnabas* are charged with hypocrisy, that *they walked not uprightly*; yet, I think, all are perswaded that these were not hypocrites. *2dly*, There is a dark unknown hypocrisy, so as neither the person himself, nor any that observes his walk, knows him to be a hypocrite; of whom that word is said, they are *deceiving and being deceived.* Some persons may be hypocrites, and they not know it; yea, and all others

thers that know their walk will not be able to call them hypocrites. There is a 3*d* sort of hypocrisy that is most gross, to wit, known and presumptuous hypocrisy; that is, for a person to play the hypocrite, and know that he does it; for a person to be personating a Christian, and yet know that he is personating a Christian; of whom that word is said, 1 *Tim.* iv. 2. they *speak lies in hypocrisy*. This is a dreadful sin; when a person can play the hypocrite, and know he is playing the hypocrite.

Now, before I prosecute this truth any further, I would have you to guard against any thing that may be spoken by them that are profane and gross, who are ready to think all religion but hypocrisy, and all the duties of religion but a form. I would say to that person that hates religion under the vail of hypocrisy, Do not think we are speaking against the form of religion: Tho' I confess there may be a form of religion where there wants the power of religion, yet there may be much of the power of religion where there is the form of religion. I would ask this question at these that hate religion under the vail of hypocrisy, and say, they cannot tolerate that such hypocrites should get leave to do as they do; I would ask this question at you, What is the reason, sir, that ye hate hypocrisy? O say ye, I hate hypocrisy, but I hate not religion. But would ye know why indeed ye hate hypocrisy? it is this, ye hate not only the image of Christ, but ye hate the very picture of it. Some hate not only real Christians, but they hate the very picture of them. I say this to the person that hates hypocrisy and is profane; He may say what he will, he hates not hypocrisy, but he hates the very shadow and picture of Christ. 2*dly*, I would ask this question at you, which will clear this; O thou who hatest hypocrisy, what

what is the reason thou hatest not drunkenness, swearing and whoredom also? Some persons will persecute hypocrisy, and yet they will swear and lie, and *add drunkenness to their thirst.* I tell you why the profane person hates hypocrisy, and yet loves drunkenness; he hates hypocrisy because it is a sin that looks like godliness, and he loves drunkenness because it is a sin that looks like the devil. A 3*d* question that I would ask at such is this; What wilt thou say in that day, when Christ shall ask that question at you which *Gideon* asked at *Zeba* and *Zalmunna*, *What manner of men were these whom ye persecuted?* and ye shall answer, *As thou art, so were they, each one resembled the similitude of a prince.* I confess, I never loved the person that hated hypocrisy, and yet loved profanity and gross sins.

At this time I shall go no further, but shall speak a little to six or seven steps unto which a hypocrite cannot go. 1*st*, A hypocrite cannot go that length, as to mourn over original sin. Durst thou ever say thou hast sitten down in secret, and cried forth, *O wretched man that I am!* &c. that is a token thou hast passed from death to life. I would give you two reasons why a hypocrite cannot mourn over original sin; 1. Because the guilt of original sin is only taken up by faith; nothing can discover the guilt and filthiness of original sin so lively as faith: Faith is that which discovers to a person that woful root of bitterness that is within him. The 2*d* ground why the hypocrite cannot mourn over original sin is this; So long as a person is a stranger from Christ, he looks upon original sin as none of his own. Are there not many that think original sin is none of their own? They will grone under actual sins, because they cannot put them by, but they are their own; but O they cannot believe that

that original sin, that was commited five thousand years ago, should be theirs. Now, till once a person begin to engage with Christ, it is impossible for him to believe original sin to be his own. Are there any here, to whom sometimes original sin hath been their burden? I say, That is a step a hypocrite never went, nor ever shall go. I think indeed, he is an excellent Christian that can live under these three: 1. To think original sin as great as any actual transgression. 2. I think, he is an excellent Christian, that can believe original sin is as much his own as if he had eaten the forbidden fruit; and no doubt it is as much his own as if indeed he had eaten it, tho' it is hard for a Christian to believe it. 3. I think, he is an excellent Christian, who can believe that the root of every iniquity that ever was vented or named in the world is within his cursed heart, and that upon a suitable temptation we would be brought to act and commit such an evil.

There is a 2*d* step that a hypocrite cannot go, namely, A hypocrite can never win this length, to have a higher account of Christ than of any thing in the world beside. A hypocrite may win to love Christ in some respect; but he can never win to this length, to love Christ above all things. Now I would pose you with this; Did ye ever bring your hearts to this, that ye could take angels to witness, ye desired nothing so much as Christ, and Christ had all thy desire? that if Christ had been put in one balance, and all thy idols into another, in thy apprehension Christ would have weighed them down exceedingly? Alas! it is certain, many of us that are here, if we would not lie, we durst not for a world say that Christ is preferred above all things. I confess indeed, Christ should have the prehemi-

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nence in all things; but, alas! many of us give him the preheminence in nothing.

3*dly*, A hypocrite can never go this length, even to mourn over his misbelief, and contempt of the gospel. Didst thou ever in secret pour forth thy heart to God because of thy misbelief? that is a length a hypocrite cannot march. And I give you these reasons why a hypocrite cannot mourn for misbelief; 1. Because he doth not take up the sinfulness of the sin of misbelief. I think, it is one of the great arts of a Christian, to take up and comprehend the sinfulness of that sin of misbelief. 2. Because it is impossible to think misbelief an exceeding sinful sin, till once the matchless excellency, beauty and worth of Christ be discovered.

There is a 4*th* step which a hypocrite cannot go, to wit, A hypocrite cannot come this length, as to mourn over the eating and drinking unworthily the body and blood of the Lord. A hypocrite seldom (or never almost) wins to a hearty mourning over his eating and drinking unworthily; that is a sin which oft-times lies without the reach of a hypocrite's confession and prayer.

The 5*th* thing which a hypocrite cannot at all times win to (which if ye have gone, ye may conclude ye have *passed from death to life)* is this; He can never win to a hearty renunciation of his own righteousness, to be totally denied unto his own righteousness, and to flee wholly for refuge unto Jesus Christ. It is a great mystery of a Christian practice, to be wholly denied to the righteousness of the law, and to flee to the righteousness of the gospel, as having nothing; I say, upon strict search ye will find it a most difficult practice for a Christian to be denied to his own righteousness.

There is a 6*th* step which a hypocrite cannot go, namely,

namely, He cannot mourn ſecretly and ſeriouſly for vain thoughts and ſinful thoughts. It is a notable evidence of ſincerity, when a perſon can win to a real mourning for thoſe ſinful thoughts that are within his boſom. Canſt thou take heaven to witneſs, that vain thoughts, and the imaginations of thy own heart, do trouble and afflict thee? There are ſome indeed that care not for their thoughts, they think their thoughts are free: But know this, God will judge thee as much for thy thoughts as for thy words and practice.

There is this 7*th* ſtep which a hypocrite cannot go, to wit, He can never win to a ſtayed and compoſed walking with God; all a hypocrite's religion is by fits. This is certain, that upon ſerious ſearch it will be found, that many perſons know not what it is to be conſtant in walking with God. There are ſome times indeed they will take on many excellent fits of religion; but, as for a conſtant walking with God, they are utterly ſtrangers unto it. I tell you ſix times when a hypocrite takes on his fits of religion: 1*ſt*, A hypocrite takes on his fits of religion under the croſs: That is the time when a hypocrite, who is indeed profane, will turn religious; according to that word, *Pſal.* lxxviii. 34. *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and enquired early after God.* Some perſons will be profane in proſperity; and, when God begins to ſmite them, they will put on ſome fit of godlineſs. A 2*d* time, when a hypocrite puts on his fits of religion, is, when he is drawing near unto his grave, when death and he begins to yoke. Some perſons never mind religion till once death and they begin to ſpeak together. I ſay, It is one to a thouſand if theſe fits of religion will bear thee through. A 3*d* time is, when he is under ſome deep, preſſing and ſtrong con-

convictions. Sometimes, when God awakens a Christian's conscience, he will put on excellent fits of religion; according to that, *Acts* ii. 37. when their consciences are *pricked*, they *cry out*, (and no doubt some hypocrites among them) *Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* The *4th* time, when a hypocrite puts on many excellent fits of religion, is, when he is called to extraordinary duties. Sometimes a hypocrite will put on excellent fits of religion at a communion, and he will lay aside all those fits till the next communion come about. A *5th* time, when a hypocrite puts on excellent fits of religion, is, when there is a crown to be gotten for following of Christ; as *Jehu* cries, *Come and behold my zeal for the Lord.* It is not much for a person to be religious when Christ is in fashion? but O it is much for a person to be religious when Christ is persecuted. The *last* time I shall mention, when a hypocrite puts on his fits of religion, is, when he is in religious company, and in a religious family. Some will be religious in a religious family, and profane in a profane family. I say to that man or woman, The everlasting curse of God shall light upon thy head, if thou do not repent. O guard against this, that thou be not religious only in religious company. I think, if some were searched, they will be found always religious in religious company; and, when they are in profane company, they will turn profane. What is that? to turn into so many shapes, and to *deny Christ that bought thee!* Now, O search whether or no this evil root of bitterness be in you, that ye may mourn and lament over it; and desire that he, who is the God of truth, may give you a heart endued with this precious plant of sincerity, that, before thou *go hence and be no more*, thou mayst have that testimony,

Behold an Israelite indeed, in whose heart there is no guile.

SERMON X.

Job xxxvi. 13.

But the Hypocrites in Heart heap up Wrath: They cry not when he bindeth them.

ARE there not some who, upon a serious and impartial search of their own hearts by the candle of the Lord, may be constrained to suspect all their religion is but hypocrisy, that all their enjoyments are but delusions, and all the duties they have gone about are but formality and lying to God with the tongue? I suppose there are some of us that are here, that have taken our hearts too soon upon trust; there are some of us that are here, like those that are mentioned, *Num.* xvi. 2. *famous in the congregation*, or (as the word may be rendered) *men of names*; and yet that word may be said of us, *Rev.* iii. 1. *Thou hast a name to be living, and behold thou art dead.* I have thought that a strange expression which is in the 12th *v.* of *Jude*, where the apostle, pointing forth the hypocrite, calls him a person that is *twice dead:* That is, he is not only dead in respect of his natural state, being a stranger to God; but also he is dead in this respect, the life that once he seemed to have in the ways of God is now gone and departed from him. I wonder that some of us who are here are not made beacons upon

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the top of a mountain, and monuments of the everlasting displeasure of God: And I think it also a wonder that some of us are not carried dead from our prayers, when we go to them; for it is certain many of us can speak our prayers unto God, when we cannot *heart* our prayers unto God. I do not question but a hypocrite wearies of God, and I think God wearies as much of him. I would earnestly intreat you all to be impartial in the search of your own hearts, lest ye *go down to the grave with a lie in your right hand, a deceived heart having led you aside.* I suppose there does not only hypocrisy appear in the principle that leads us unto duty, but also in the manner of our going about duty, as likewise in the end which we have before us in going about duty. I wonder God doth not present that challenge to us, in the multitude of our prayers, *Who hath required these things at your hands?* There is a desperate boldness that hath overtaken the spirits of many, so as they can speak lies unto God with as great confidence, and as little fear, as tho' God were indeed an idol. Are there not many of us who make a fashion of prayer, while our consciences bear us witness that sometimes the half of our prayers are damnable lies? Do we not sometimes desire such a thing from God in prayer, and we care no more for it than for the street under our feet? Is it not certain, that we will sometimes seem to confess such a sin to God in prayer, and be no more weighted with it than if indeed it were no sin? and is it not certain, that we will in prayer praise God for such a thing as for sending Christ into the world, and for giving us this blessed and everlasting gospel, and yet our hearts will be no more affected with those things than if they were fancies, and not real truth? I confess, there are some of us that are

not able to speak much against hypocrisy; I suppose we may go down to our graves with this lamentation, Our *hearts are not right with God, nor stedfast in his covenant.* O believe it, hypocrisy may be spun with a small thread, and we may (as it were) paint religion and hypocrisy both upon one board. And he would be a very discerning Christian, that would be able to discern between religion and hypocrisy. Ay, know it, there are some brought within sight of the city, who shall never go there; as it were, they have been brought to the walls and ports of that excellent city, and yet never enter therein: For I am sure there is not a hypocrite in heaven to-day, but there are many thousand hypocrites in hell to-day. I make the supposition there were a hundred professors in this church to-day; it were much if fifty of us were sincere, and the root of the matter were with us. O hypocrisy, hypocrisy (tho' in them but partial, and not in its dominion) is that which hath made many of God's own children to go mourning to their grave, bedewing their way with tears all along as they went.

In the forenoon we told you there were five things we intended to speak to from those words; the first whereof was this, *That there is such a thing incident to many as hypocrisy and dissimulation.* This was clearly presupposed in the words. It is not said, the hypocrite in heart; but, the *hypocrites* in heart. And we have cleared this a little, That there is such a thing incident to many: I could wish many of us that are here were not a confirmation of this truth. And we have spoken a little to what hypocrisy is, as likewise to ten steps in which hypocrisy doth stand, and to several other things concerning this grand predominant and master sin that is among us, and doth so much take up our hearts.

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Before we leave this first doctrine from the words, we shall speak a little to these three things; 1*st*, To propose to you some considerations to press you to guard against hypocrisy. And this I speak not only to these that are indeed hypocrites, but also to those that are acquaint with God, that may have some tincture of hypocrisy.

The *first* consideration, to press you to guard against hypocrisy, is this; The person that is a hypocrite is never at real peace. I tell you three things upon which a hypocrite doth especially build his peace; 1*st*, He doth oft-times, found his peace upon the approbation of the saints. As long as a hypocrite hath a fair gale of applause, he almost never disputes his interest. The 2*d* foundation, upon which a hypocrite doth build his peace, is upon his diligence, that he *fasts twice a-week*, and he prays twice a-day. The 3*d* thing, whereon a hypocrite founds his peace, is upon his external holiness, and conformity to the letter of the law. I confess, sometimes a hypocrite may have exceeding much carnal joy and contentment, but it is when he hath the fairest gale of the world's applause. I would have you taking along this observation, which I suppose is certain; I think it is impossible for a hypocrite ever to have peace or joy when he wants applause: Let all the things of the world concur to create peace to a hypocrite, he shall not have it if he want applause.

A *second* consideration, to press you to guard against hypocrisy, is those names that hypocrisy gets in scripture, which may inforce and press this upon you, to guard against hypocrisy. And there are four names that hypocrisy gets in scripture, all which evidence that hypocrisy is a very great sin. 1*st*, Hypocrisy in the scripture is called *blasphemy*

(that is a strange name) *Rev.* ii. 9. *I know the blasphemy of those that call themselves Jews, and are not.* Yea, I say this, hypocrisy is a very near step to that unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost. Now, if there were no more to discommend hypocrisy unto you but this, that scripture calls it *blasphemy*, it were more than sufficient. 2*dly*, In scripture, hypocrisy is called *wickedness*, and eminently is it so called. This is clear by comparing *Mat.* xxii. 18. with *Mark* xii. 15. In the one place it is called *hypocrisy*, and in the other place it is rendered, *And Jesus perceiving their wickedness*; which says, that hypocrisy is a sin odious and detestable to God. 3*dly*, Hypocrisy in scripture is called a *lying unto God*; according to that word, *Psal.* lxviii. 36. *They flattered him with their mouth, and* lied *unto him with their tongue*; speaking of their hypocritical prayers. And, *Rev.* iii. 9. They *lied* unto me; and what said they? they *said they were Jews, and were not.* Now, there is a 4*th* name hypocrisy gets in scripture; it is called a *flattering* of God, and that is one of the most dreadful names that it has; it is indeed the sin which thinks God a liar, and therefore will be pleased with fair words and compliments: Therefore it is said, *Psal.* lxxviii. 36. *They flattered him with their lips.* There is a 5*th* name that hypocrisy gets in scripture, and it is that, *Jam.* i. 8. where the hypocrite is called a *double-minded man*, or (as the word is in its own language) a *two-hearted man*, or a man that hath a heart within a heart; which speaks this, that the hypocrite is a person that hath two hearts, yea, and (as it were) he hath two tongues. And the same word is in *Psal.* xii. 2. where *David* prays to be kept from the *deceitful man*; the word is, from the *two-hearted man*, a man that hath two hearts. If so I may speak, the hypocrite

crite hath one heart to God, and another to the devil. Now, I say, all those trysted together do point forth the odious nature of the sin of hypocrisy; and may it not be an argument to press you to guard against hypocrisy?

The *third* consideration, to press you to guard against hypocrisy, is this; It is the sin which God doth especially hate and abhor. Would ye know the thing which God doth especially hate, and his soul doth lothe? it is the evil of hypocrisy; according to that word, *Prov.* vi. 16, 17. *There are six things that the Lord hates, yea, seven are an abomination unto him:* And would ye know what leads the van? There is, 1*st*, a *proud look*, that looks to conceit; and, 2*dly*, There is a *lying tongue*, which is hypocrisy. It is even for a man to speak fair to God, and yet there is abomination in his heart. As likewise it may be gathered from that, *Prov.* xi. 20. *He that is upright in his way is his delight*; and, by the rule of contraries, he that is not straight and upright in his way is abomination unto God. I am afraid the soul of the Lord is disjoined from many of us, and that he hates us; as it were, he doth not hear us speak, nor hear us pray. *The sacrifice* of the hypocrite is *abomination unto the Lord*; and why? *because he brings it with a wicked mind.* There are some that can paint their prayers, that can never make spiritual prayers.

The *fourth* consideration, to press you to guard against hypocrisy, is this; That hypocrisy is that which keeps a Christian from a stayed, composed and constant walk with God; according to that word, *Jam.* i. 8. *The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.* Ye will never find the hypocrite where ye left him at another time. I tell you what the hypocrite is; he is that which we call the weather-

ther-cock that is put in some high place, which turns as ever the wind turns: He is (as it were) in a perpetual circle and motion. That is a searching word which Christ hath, *Mat.* vi. 16. where Christ makes mention of some that were Christians in their faces, that were not Christians in their hearts. There are some who lodge Christ in their looks, who never lodge him their hearts; these are they that disfigure their faces, and appear outwardly to fast, but within are nothing. I say, Would ye win to be fixed, trusting in the Lord? then by all means study to guard against this evil of hypocrisy.

The *fifth* consideration, to move you to guard against hypocrisy, is this; That hypocrisy is the mother of pride, and pride is the daughter of hypocrisy. In short, it is this, hypocrisy and pride will never sunder: I defy a person to be proud, but he is a hypocrite; and to be a hypocrite, but he is proud, *Hab.* ii. 4. *The man that is lifted up, his heart is not upright in him*; that is, he that is presumptous is not sincere. For clearing of this, I would have you take notice of this; Pride doth oft-times consist more in the affections than in the thoughts, pride doth stand more in desire than it doth in our light. To make out this; some persons, when they are thinking of themselves, will say, O I am but a poor unworthy man, and, There is none like me; and yet that person will fret if any other body speak any thing of him but good; he will desire all men to speak good of him, and to have high thoughts of him, tho' he hath something in him which may seem to say he hath no high thoughts of himself. Therefore observe this; pride consists as much in desires and affections as in thoughts: For tho' thou shouldst have no high thoughts of thyself, yet thy desiring others to have high thoughts of thee, and thy

thy being affected with sorrow for want of those high thoughts of thee in others, that is pride. I do think the hypocrite hath these three steps of pride ordinarily attending him; 1*st*, He cannot abide that any should excel him in gifts; that is a thing very anxious to him. 2*dly*, He cannot abide that any should exceed him in applause. And, 3*dly*, He cannot abide that any should excel him in diligence, at least the report of it; that is it in which the hypocrite's pride vents itself, he cannot abide that any should be above him. And O is not this the language of our cursed hearts? *I am, and there is none beside me.* Yea, such is the desperate pride of our hearts, that when any will be speaking good of us, then most ordinarily our hearts will begin to speak good of themselves.

The *sixth* consideration, to press you to guard against hypocrisy, is this; The person that is under the foot of hypocrisy, it is impossible for him to profit by preaching. What is the reason that ye profit not by all that is spoken to you from day to day? it is even this, ye are not upright and sincere. This is clear, *Micah* ii. 7. *Does not my word good to them that walk uprightly?* that is, My word does good to them that are sincere; and, upon the contrary, the reason why it doth not profit them is, because they are hypocrites. I suppose much sincerity would make us excellent proficients by hearing sermons. I tell you three great ends the hypocrite hath in coming to sermons; 1*st*, A hypocrite comes oft to the church, rather to edify his light, than to better his affections; that is, rather to have his knowledge increased, than to have affections in order: That is a cursed design. I know, a person may come to have his light bettered; but O do not make it your only design and end to have your light bettered. There is

is a 2*d* end of a hypocrite's coming to the publick ordinances, and that is, to satisfy his natural conscience; or, 3*dly*, to be seen of men. Now, none of these are gracious right principles of obedience. Or, 4*thly*, This is ordinarily our end in coming to the publick ordinances, to satisfy our curiosity more than to satisfy our case; hence it is, that in preaching we are more taken up in hearing men gifts, than in making application of what is said. Now, what is the reason ye profit not by preaching? it is this, your hypocrisy. This is abundantly clear, 1 *Pet.* ii. 1, 2. where, directing them to *desire the sincere milk of the word like new-born babes*, he lays this for a ground, *Lay aside all hypocrisy*.

The *seventh* consideration, to help you to guard against hypocrisy, is this; The want of sincerity, and the having of hypocrisy, is a mighty obstruction of communion and fellowship with God. Would ye know the reason why some persons are admitted so seldom to converse and correspond with God? it is even this, we are not sincere. That is a strange word, *Job* xiii. 16. *The hypocrite shall not come before him*; that is, be whom he will that God doth admit before him, the hypocrite is never the man. And it is clear from *Psal.* xi. at the close, *His countenance doth behold the upright*. And, by the rule of contraries, the person that is not sincere shall not behold the countenance of God. I am perswaded of this, if sincerity were our royal attainment, and if sincerity and truth in the inward parts were the thing were pursuing after, we would have six enjoyments of God where we have not one; for the hypocrite can neither seek enjoyments, nor improve them when he has them. That is a strange and most excellent word, *Psal.* cxl. ult. *The upright shall dwell in his presence*. Would ye know the person

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that is admitted to fellowship and communion with God? it is the sincere and upright Christian; which speaks this, that the hypocrite is the person that is not admitted at all to dwell in his presence: And I may say, that the hypocrisy even of his sons and daughters is that which doth exceedingly impede that noble and precious correspondence which should be between them and heaven.

The *eighth* consideration, to help you to guard against hypocrisy, is this; The person that is a hypocrite is a person that is near a fall. Would ye know the person that will keep his feet best in a stormy day? it is the sincere Christian; according to that word, *Prov.* x. 9. *He that walks uprightly, walks surely.* A sincere Christian will wrestle through many difficulties, and overcome many temptations, which will over-hale the hypocrite. O you that would overcome temptations, I would press this upon you, to study *truth in the inward parts.*

Now that which, *secondly*, I shall speak to shall be this; What is the reason that hypocrisy is so rife and universal an evil among many? And I shall name to you those five reasons why hypocrisy is so rife an evil.

The *first* reason of it is this; That most folks love exceeding well to be spoken of, and therefore it is that hypocrisy is so rife. In short, I think pride is the very rise of hypocrisy: Believe it, this is sure, if there were less pride, there would be less hypocrisy; for there are many persons that desire to be spoken of, and will take on a profession, that they may attain the applause of men: However, I think indeed, it is but a poor heaven for a person to have the approbation of men that are *liars.*

The *second* thing, which is the rise of hypocrisy, is;

is; That persons are not afraid to take on a profession, I think that person may suspect himself, that hath taken on a profession without fear. Many take up religion at their foot, and are not afraid they shall not be answerable to their profession. I think it were suitable for a person, when he takes on a profession, to tremble three days in the bitterness of his soul. Alas! I fear there are many fearless professors in this time, and that will make many apostate professors in the time of trial.

The *third* reason, why hypocrisy is so rife, is this; Many persons live not within sight of the omniscience of God. O! did ye know that he is a *searcher of the hearts*, and *trier of the reins*, that would indeed help you much against hypocrisy. This is clear, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 17. where *David*, rendering a reason of his sincerity and uprightness, says, *Because I knew thou art a searcher of the hearts.* If we did believe that God did behold us better than we do ourselves, we durst not so much counterfeit religion; but, alas! we say, *God doth not see.*

The *fourth* reason, why hypocrisy doth so much abound, is this; Persons are destitute of the fear of God. This may be gathered from *Josh.* xxiv. where he presses them to sincerity, from the fear of the Lord. I am sure, if we were walking much under the impression of the fear of the Lord, we durst not counterfeit religion so much as we do: I never loved ape's religion.

The *fifth* reason that hypocrisy is so rife is this; Persons are not convinced of the necessity of sincerity. Many think profession an excellent thing, but they cannot abide to be bound to all the duties of religion. I think, it is too ordinary what an atheist spoke, "The profession of religion is pleasant, but the "practice of religion is unpleasant." Some love the

coat

coat of Chriſt, but love not the real grace of Chriſt; ſome would have a form of godlineſs, but care not indeed for the power of godlineſs.

That which, *thirdly*, I ſhall ſpeak to ſhall be this; I ſhall propoſe ſix or ſeven marks of a hypocrite, whereby ye may know whether or not this diſcourſe hath been to you.

The *firſt* mark of a hypocrite, that I ſhall give, ſhall be that in the text; *He cries not when God binds him*; that is, under the croſs he cries not unto God. There are three croſſes that will be exceeding great trials to a hypocrite; there is the croſs of deſertion, the croſs of darkneſs, and the croſs of outward poverty: All theſe three croſſes will be great trials to a perſon's ſincerity. Now, are there not ſome that, let Chriſt deſert them never ſo oft, they *cry not when God binds them?* tho' their ſpirits be under never ſo many bonds, they do not cry unto God. I ſay, It is an undeniable evidence of a hypocrite, not to cry when he is under deſertion and bonds; and I ſuppoſe, if that be a mark of a hypocrite, many of us may cry *guilty*. I would ask this queſtion at you; Are there not many that have a name of being Chriſtians, that it is thirty days ſince they ſaw the King, and yet never ſent a ſigh unto God for that? and are ye not then the perſons that *cry not when God binds them?* O is there not a man or woman here that will own this, that they *cry not when God binds them?* are there not many bonds upon the ſpirits of many, and yet they *cry not when God binds them?* I tell you what the hypocrite is like; he is like *Iſſachar*, couching down between two burdens. O fear and ſtand in aw, thou that crieſt not when God binds thee, leſt thou be indeed a hypocrite. Now I would preſs this home upon you: Are there not many

many, who, under the sad and afflicting dispensations they meet with, know not what it is to cry unto God? I tell you the cross a hypocrite can worst bear; it is reproach.

The *second* mark of a hypocrite (which will be yet searching, and indeed ought to put you to trial) is this; That it is an undeniable mark of a hypocrite, to be more affected with one spot upon his face than with ten spots upon his heart; that, before there were one blemish upon his face, he would rather have a thousand blemishes upon his heart. O but, before we would see any thing wrong without, we would rather let all go wrong within! I am sure, be who he will, that is the person whom the text speaks of, and he is the hypocrite in heart. Many are more afraid to be found sinners by men, than by God. Some rather than they were known by men to be such as they are, they would choose to be damnable atheists unto God, and let none know of it. I would make this out unto you thus; Are there not some, as long as their sin is hidden, and none of the world knows of it, they will never shed a tear for it? but let once the world know of it, and their hearts will be distracted with sorrow. There are some who are guilty of the sin of fornication, of which the world doth not know, and in this case they will never have a sad heart for it; but let once the world know it, and they will weep bitterly: And this is the reason of it, we choose rather to lose the approbation of God, than the approbation of men. Ay, know it, some would rather lose the approbation of heaven, than the approbation of ministers.

The *third* mark of one that is a hypocrite (and I would desire you to search yourselves by it) is this; As for the hypocrite in heart, this is the very scope and end of the most part of his duties, *to be seen*

seen of men; according to that mark of the hypocrite that is given, *Mat.* xxiii. 5. *All their works are to be seen of men.* Are there not many of us, that, when we go to pray, could wish that all our acquaintances did know we are praying at such a time? Yea, is not this a secret piece of our hypocrisy, we will be glad when others do surprise us praying, we will be glad when our acquaintances do surprise us praying at such a time? Some can never say that ever they prayed from a right principle, nor to a right end. I trow, when the books shall be opened, many of our prayers, and the ends of our going to communions, shall make us ashamed. I do not discommend the duties; but, alas, the most part of our actions are to be seen of men.

The *fourth* mark of one that is a hypocrite is this; He is a person that never did suspect his hypocrisy, they have the confidence that they were always sincere. I say, Sincerity is oft-times joined with some suspicion of hypocrisy.

The *fifth* evidence of hypocrisy is this; A person that is a hypocrite loves many things more than God, he trusts many things more than God, he obeys many things more than God, and he desires many things more than God, and he fears man more than God. So that there are these five great idols of a hypocrite; there are the idols of love, there are the idols of fear, there are the idols of obedience, there are the idols of desire, and there are the idols of faith: I call these the idols of faith, even any thing that a person trusts in more than God; I call the idols of love, any thing a person loves more than God; I call the idols of obedience, any thing a person obeys more than God; I call the idols of fear, any thing that a person fears more than God; and I call the idols of desire, any thing that

that a person desires more than God. Now, I say, a hypocrite hath all these five idols dwelling within him.

The *sixth* evidence of one that is a hypocrite is this; He is more taken up in the pursuit of visible holiness than of invisible holiness; he is more taken up in pursuing after the shadow of religion, than after the substance of religion; according to that word which is in *Mat.* xxiii. 26, 27, 28. I would have you knowing this, There are some who have indeed begotten themselves into a lively hope, whom Christ did never beget. It is a strange word which *Job* hath, *Job* viii. 13. where he compares the hope of the hypocrite to a *spider's web*. Now, what is the reason that the hope of the hypocrite is like the spider's web? This is one ground of it; As the spider's web is spun out of its own bowels, so the hope of a hypocrite is spun out of his own conceit and bowels, without any foundation or ground from God. Alas! the day is coming, that *fearfulness shall surprise the hypocrites in Sion.*

I have these five questions to ask at the hypocrite, and shall close.

The *1st* question that I would ask at the hypocrite is that question that *Abijah* asked at *Jeroboam's* wife, 1 *Kings* xiv. 6. *Why feignest thou thyself to be another?* O hypocrite, what is the reason thou feignest thyself to be a real Christian, since thou art not indeed real? what is the reason thou pretendest to be so?

The *2d* question that I would ask at the hypocrite is this; Dost thou think that hypocrisy and the form of religion will bring thee to heaven? I say, If thou hadst a profession a thousand times more big than it is, it should never bring thee to heaven. I confess indeed, that a profession of religion is

is beautiful, and that a good name is excellent; but O if ye could be perſwaded to purſue leſs after the approbation of men, and more after the approbation of God! I think that word which is ſpoken of *Demetrius*, 3 *John* 12. Demetrius *is of good report of all men, and of the truth itſelf*; I ſay, Theſe two put together, to be *of good report of all men, and of the truth itſelf*, would make up an excellent compound.

The 3*d* queſtion that I would ask at the hypocrite is this; Think ye that ye can ſatisfy God with a profeſſion? O know it, the *joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment*. That is a ſtrange word, *Job* xx. 5, 6. where, ſpeaking of the joy of the hypocrite, he ſays, Let him *mount up his head unto heaven*, and his fame and report be never ſo great, yet *he ſhall fly away as a ſhadow, and evaniſh as a dream in the night*. O know it, God is One whoſe *eyes are as a flame of fire*, that can *diſcern the ſecrets and intents of the heart*.

There is this, 4*thly*, that I would ask at you, namely, What a poor advantage haſt thou, tho' every one that knows thee ſhould cry, *Hoſanna, hoſanna*, and ſhould be praiſing thee in the gate, and all thy acquaintance ſhould be putting an eminent note of excellency upon thee? if Chriſt ſhall ſay to thee, *Depart from me*, what a poor advantage haſt thou? What is the matter tho' all men ſpeak evil of us, if Chriſt ſpeak good of us? and what is the matter tho' all men ſpeak good of us, if Chriſt do not believe it? Chriſt's commendation is worth the commendation of a world of precious ſaints.

There is this, *laſtly*, that I would ask at you, namely, What poor beauty and excellency is in the form of religion? and what exquiſite and unſpeak-

able beauty is in the power of religion? Now, what is the reason thou art so much taken up in pursuing that which is less beautiful? and neglecting to pursue that which is yet more beautiful? I shall give you these two reasons why some pursue more the form than the power of religion: 1*st*, The form of religion is much more easily gotten than the power of it; and that is the reason why many persons seek the form of religion, that seek not the power of it: It is easy to be a Christian in name, but it is not easy to be a Christian indeed. The 2*d* reason why persons seek the form of religion, and not the substance of it, is, Because some persons can discern the beauty of the form of religion, that cannot discern the beauty of the substance of religion. Search your own hearts, and ye will find this to be the ground why many persons pursue the form of religion, that do not pursue after the reality and substance of it. I desire you, as in the sight of God who shall one day judge your hearts, that you would be pursuing after truth in the inward parts. I shall say no more to guard against any that may take advantage from what is now said against the mere form without the power of religion, but that they take this along with them: We have not in all this been speaking against the profession of religion. I would say these two words to such; 1*st*, Thou that art so grosly profane, wilt thou be convinced of this; must not religion be an excellent thing, that so many fall in love with the very form of it? I say, If there were no more to convince profane persons that religion is an excellent thing but this, it were more than sufficient. O strangers to godliness, must not religion be a precious thing, seeing there are thousands in the visible church who are lovers of the very form of it? 2*dly*, I would say this, If a person

ſon that hath the form of godlineſs come ſhort of heaven, how much rather thou that haſt neither the form nor the ſubſtance of godlineſs? I intreat the perſons whom this diſcourſe concerns, that they would ſearch their hearts, and ſee if this root of bitterneſs be in them: As likewiſe, ye that are ſtrangers to God, will ye be provoked to give up your hearts unto him, and make an everlaſting reſignation of yourſelves to him? Now unto him that is able to perſwade you, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON XI.

The great Prejudice of Slothfulneſs.

Prov. xix. 15.

Slothfulneſs caſteth into a deep Sleep.——

WHERE is the advantage and profit of all the pains that are taken upon you? Is not our preaching like writing on the ſand, and plowing upon the rock, which leaves no impreſſion? We preach much unto you, and ye hear much from day to day, and yet ye do not profit. I would only ſay this by the way, There is no preaching that ſhall ever do you good, till it be three times preached; not that I mean it ought to be three times ſaid over unto you, but it muſt be three times preached before

it do you good. 1*ſt*, It muſt be from heaven to the miniſter's heart; and 2*dly*, It muſt be preached from his heart unto the people; and, 3*dly*, They muſt preach it to their own heart over again. And the want of ſome of theſe is the reaſon that oft-times we have occaſion to cry forth, *Wo is me, my leanneſs, my leanneſs.* Are ye not longing till the *reproach of your barrenneſs* be taken away, that that commandment might come forth, *O woman that haſt not travailed with child, ſing and rejoice; for ſhe that was barren hath more children than the married wife?* This evil of ſlothfulneſs is, we conceive, a moſt reigning and univerſal evil in thoſe days. In the verſe we have read, we have ſlothfulneſs painted forth in a moſt lively form and ſhape, that perſons may be conſtrained to hate it and to loathe it. There are four things to be taken notice of from this verſe, which will be taken in the explication of the words; 1*ſt*, *That ſlothfulneſs, ſluggiſhneſs, and neglect of duty, is an evil that perſons ought to avoid and ſhun.* The 2*d* obſervation is this, *That ſlothfulneſs is the mother of deep ſecurity.* Slothfulneſs caſts into a deep ſleep. There is this, 3*dly*, that I would have you taking notice of, namely, *Slothfulneſs is the fore-runner of many ſad ſpiritual ſtrokes that a perſon ſhall meet with.* The 4*th* obſervation is by comparing *v.* 15. with *v.* 16. *He that keeps the commandment, keeps his own ſoul; but he that deſpiſeth his ways, ſhall die:* And it is this, *That ſlothfulneſs is a ſoul-deſtroying ſin; it is that which is the ruin of that precious thing, the ſoul.*

As for the firſt, *That ſlothfulneſs, ſluggiſhneſs and neglect of duty, perſons ought to ſhun and to beware of.* It is clear from that word, *Rom.* xii. 11. *Be not*

not ſlothful in buſineſs, but fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord. And that word, *Heb.* vi. 7. *Be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.* And likewiſe it is clear that we ought to beware of ſlothfulneſs, from the conſtant experience of the ſaints that have gone before us, that have been much taken up in the diligent acting and conſtant way of going about duty; according to that word, *Pſal.* cxxxii. 4. *I will not give ſleep to my eyes, nor ſlumber to my eyelids.* As likewiſe it is clear from the many diſadvantages and inconveniencies that wait upon ſlothfulneſs, of the truth of which this text is a proof. *Laſtly*, It is clear that it is the duty of a Chriſtian eſpecially to avoid ſlothfulneſs, becauſe of the many excellent commands that are given to diligence, and the many ſweet advantages that wait upon the Chriſtian that makes godlineſs his exerciſe.

Now, before I can proceed to ſpeak any further unto this truth, I would clear a little what ſlothfulneſs is. And we conceive it ſtands in theſe four or five things; 1*ſt*, It ſtands in this, namely, In a Chriſtian's neglect of known duty, that notwithſtanding ſuch a thing is known to be our duty, yet we will ſinfully neglect it. 2*dly*, It ſtands in this, to wit, A Chriſtian's ſlighting the opportunity that he hath for going about duty. When there is an occaſion ſent unto you to pray, ye dreadfully ſlight the opportunity, and will not ſet about to do it. 3*dly*, It ſtands in this, even a perſon's not ſeeking, and waiting for an opportunity for the doing of duty. Some will not at all exerciſe themſelves in this, in ſeeking and in waiting for an opportunity in which they may go about duty. 4*thly*, Slothfulneſs ſtands in this, namely, The ſmalleſt temptation or diverſion that one meets with will be a ſufficient impediment

to hinder them from duty; that is a woful ſtep of a perſon's ſlothfulneſs. And, *laſtly*, which is the cape-ſtone of ſlothfulneſs, That perſons are glad when they meet with ſuch a diverſion from duty. Oft-times it is ſo; we are more glad to embrace the temptation of the devil than he is to tempt us.

Now, in ſpeaking to this, I ſhall touch at two things; 1*ſt*, What is the riſe, original and fountain of the dreadful ſlothfulneſs that is among many? 2*dly*, What is the reaſon that perſons in thoſe days are ſo dreadful neglecters of known duty?

The 1*ſt* thing that hath influence upon it is much worldly-mindedneſs, and thoſe heart-purſuits and engagements after and unto our idols and the things of the world. Know ye not that word, *It is impoſſible for one to ſerve two maſters?* if ye make the world your maſter, ye cannot make Chriſt your Maſter. It is good to make the world our ſervant, but it is a deſperate piece of iniquity to make it our maſter, 1 *Cor.* ix. 25. *Every man that ſtriveth* (that is, would be diligent) *for the maſtery, he muſt be temperate* (or moderate) *in all things.* And, *Iſa.* lxiv. 6. compared with *v.* 7. In *v.* 6. *Our iniquities like the wind have taken us away*; and then he ſubjoins, *There is none that calls upon God.* Is it not known that our hearts are ſo bent upon the world, that almoſt it is a burden to us to give any time to duty? I would have you taking this along with you; It is a great miſtake among perſons, who ſay, That prayer may help a Chriſtian to comfort, prayer may help a Chriſtian to heaven, prayer may help a miniſter to preach; but it will not help a merchant to ſell his wares, and another tradeſman to exerciſe his calling: For I have known merchants, that knew their own hearts better than ſome of us do, who aſſured me, that they

they never had the ſpirit of their employment better than when they prayed beſt and moſt in the morning. Now, as ye would not ly under this evil of ſlothfulneſs; then ſtop your hearts in the purſuit of the things of the world.

The 2*d* thing that hath influence upon our ſlothfulneſs is our want of delight in God, and of love unto him. Is it poſſible that perſons that have delight in the Lord, and their hearts burning within them with love, can be ſo little in the exerciſe of duty as we are? Believe it, our little exerciſe of duty is a ſpeaking evidence of the decay of delight in God, and love to him; as appears from *Iſa.* xliii. 22. where he fathers their neglect of duty upon the want of delight in God. I am ſure, delight in God would make us bow our knee oftner to God than we do, delight in God would make it a wearineſs to us to deſiſt from the duty of prayer. It is no wonder ſome of us do not pray much, and do not meditate much, and do not read the ſcriptures much; becauſe we queſtion much if ever the fire of love was kindled in our hearts. *O ſleepers, wake, and call upon your God.* If delight in God were our mercy and our exerciſe, we would think it our burden to be ſhut out from his preſence but one day.

A 3*d* thing that hath influence upon it is our formality in duty when we go about it. Nothing is ſo much the fore-runner of ſlothfulneſs, as to be formal in duty when we go about it. Theſe two ſiſter-ſins are joined together, *Iſa.* lxiv. 7. *There is none that calls upon thy name, nor ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee.* If once ye come that length to go about duty in a formal and indifferent way, ere long this ſhall be thy lot, thou ſhalt be unwilling to go about any duty. I am ſure, if ſome over-heard us pray when we are alone, they

might cry out, I am ſure yonder perſon cares not whether he be heard or no. And it is, we think, one of the dreadfulleſt evidences of the ſelf-ſeeking that reigns in many, that, when they pray in company, they will hoiſe up all their ſails, and wait for the coming of the wind, and there will not be an expreſſion that may help for the getting of liberty but they will make uſe of it; and, when they are alone, they will let their words fall to the ground, and will not ſtir up themſelves to take hold of God. What ſays that? it ſays, In your publick prayers ye ſeek yourſelves more than God. And I am ſure, if ye were ſeeking him in publick, ye would ſeek him in private alſo.

A *4th* thing that hath influence upon it is this; There are three conſtraining fountains and principles of doing duty, which are not lively upon our hearts. Know ye the three thing that drive Chriſtians unto duty? There is love, neceſſity, and fear; theſe are the three things that lead a Chriſtian to duty: And, if none of theſe be lively upon a Chriſtian's heart, he will not pray much aright. Love unto God, and delight in him, is that which leads a Chriſtian to duty; and ſo neceſſities, when they are lively and apprehended, will make them go up to the fountain which is able to compenſe and fill up the depth of their neceſſity: The depth of neceſſity leads up to the fulneſs of God; neceſſity leads a Chriſtian to duty. I tell you what neceſſity is like; it is like hunger: If a man be hungry, he will dig through ſtone-walls for meat; ſo neceſſity, if it be lively upon a Chriſtian, he had rather go far off than want an opportunity to pray. Neceſſity hath not a deſire to God but one, and that is, To be near God. And alſo love, when it is lively upon a Chriſtian's ſpirit, is the principle of his obedience; according

ding to that word, *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* Love never knew what it was to ſlight and diſpute a commandment. This is the great divinity of love; *God hath ſpoken in his holineſs, I will rejoice.* And love cries out, *All that the Lord hath commanded me, I will do it.* 3. Fear is that which puts a Chriſtian to duty; fear to offend the majeſty of God, and fear of the diſadvantages that attend the neglect of duty. No queſtion, if once the fear of God be out, through our indulging our idol, we immediately ſlack in our diligence in duty. That is a remarkable word, *Job* xv. 4. *Thou reſtraineſt prayer before him, and thou caſteſt off fear.*

5thly, The dreadful atheiſm that is among many hath influence upon it. They do not believe there is a God, and therefore they ſlight that which he calls for. This is clear by comparing the 1ſt and 2d verſes of the 14th Pſalm, *The fool hath ſaid in his heart, There is not a God.* And, in the end of the 2d verſe, *They ſeek not God.* That is a ſpeaking evidence of our atheiſm, we do ſinfully ſlight and neglect known duties.

6thly, This hath influence upon ſlothfulneſs, and neglect of thoſe duties that he calls for at our hands, namely, The ſweetneſs and beauty of duties is gone away from us. Some look upon the duties of religion as their burden, and ſome look upon the duties of religion as their bond and obligation; but few of us look upon the duties of religion as our honour. Now, till once thou come to this, to think the duties of religion as much a part of thy honour as a part of thy ſubjection, it will be much for thee to be conſtant in the exerciſe of them. Is it not certain, that, ere we prayed ſometimes, we had rather go very far off? We dow not abide to ſubject ourſelves to the yoke of Chriſt; and hence it is that we

we cry forth, O *what a wearineſs is it* to ſerve the Lord? We think it hard to ſubject ourſelves to all thoſe things which he calls for at our hands.

7*thly*, There is this that hath as much influence upon it as any thing, tho' it be not much obſerved, to wit, There are many who have not come to believe the reality of this, that *godlineſs is great gain*: And no doubt, if the reality, the beauty and advantage of godlineſs were believed, we could not but be walking in the paths of it. I think indeed, he hath come to a good length, that hath come to believe and be perſwaded in his ſoul of this, that godlineſs is a real thing: And, if perſons will ſearch themſelves, they will find that many of the evils of thoſe days, and that are to be found with them, have ſprung from this root of bitterneſs, the want of the faith of this, that *godlineſs is great gain*. I deſire you to believe that godlineſs is no fancy nor notion; ere long it ſhall be made to appear a truth.

The 8*th* thing that hath influence upon it is, The great dominion that our idols have over us, and the reigning power of our predominant luſts, are that which makes us to be led aſide from the doing of duty. I tell you two great idols that are enemies to diligence, and are (as it were) the parents of ſlothfulneſs: There is that great idol of ſelf-righteouſneſs, that perſons have a great reſpect unto. This is clear by comparing *Song* v. 2. with the 3d verſe, *I have waſhed my feet, how can I defile them?* that is, I have attained to ſuch a length of ſanctification, that I need not trouble myſelf for more: And hence it is that *the ſluggard is wiſer in his own conceit than ſeven men that can render a reaſon*. And, *Philip.* iii. 12. *I forget thoſe things that are behind* (and that makes him a diligent Chriſtian)

and

and preſs forward to what is before. The ſecond idol that hath much influence upon it is that great *Dagon* of ſelf-indulgence; we dow not put ourſelves to any toil and labour. That is oft-times our word unto ourſelves, which *Peter* had unto Chriſt, *Pity thyſelf.* And O that curſed pity and cruel mercy we have unto ourſelves! I may ſay, The *mercy* of ſuch a cruel one is but *cruelty.* We dow not want an hour's ſleep, tho' we ſhould have an hour's enjoyment of Chriſt.

Now I ſhall, *ſecondly*, propoſe ſome conſiderations to hold forth the aggravations of this ſin of ſlothfulneſs.

There is this 1*ſt* aggravation of it, That perſons ſlight a duty, tho' they have an opportunity to do it; they will ſlight and ſin away a golden occaſion that they have for the doing of duty. A perſon that hath come this length, he may know that ſlothfulneſs hath a great power and dominion over him: And is it not oft-times ſo? I think, if all the times that we have neglected duty when we have had opportunity to do it, and have been under the conviction of its being our duty, were known, we would be aſhamed of ourſelves. Yea, to make this more ſtrong, there are ſome, when they have the opportunity to do duty, and conviction that it is their duty, the very air of a temptation, yea, the very power of ſlothfulneſs, will make them to ſlight that duty.

The 2*d* aggravation of ſlothfulneſs is this; When the opportunity to pray, and the motions of the Spirit tryſt together, we ſlight the duty. Is it not certain we will ſometimes have an opportunity to pray, and likewiſe there will be the beginnings and fore-runners of an approaching enjoyment, and of the ſweet breathings of the Spirit, the heart will be (as

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it were all on wing; and yet, notwithstanding of both these, thou wilt *sit alone and keep silence?* That is a mighty aggravation of slothfulness; it is for a person to say, I care not for Christ; and, when he sends (as it were) the fore-runner of his approaching presence, we close all the doors of our heart, that he may not win in.

The 3*d* aggravation of slothfulness is this; When we have an opportunity, and the beauty of the duty is also discovered unto us, yet we neglect it. Is it not sometimes that God will present an opportunity to pray, and he will discover to the soul the sweetness, the beauty and advantage of the duty; and yet at the same very time the Christian will slight his call, and keep silence, and not bow his knee unto God? Now, no question, that is a great aggravation of slothfulness; it is the same as for a person to say, He cares not for the doing of his commandments, even when they are adorned with all beauty.

The *4th* aggravation of slothfulness is for persons to neglect duty after the Lord hath appeared unto them in that duty twice, after eminent discoveries of the beauty, excellency and sweetness of Christ in such a duty. This was the aggravation of *Solomon*'s sin, *He departed from the Lord after he had appeared unto him twice*, 1 Kings xi. 9. Now, is not this a great aggravation of this sin, that after in prayer we have tasted of the sweetness *that causes the lips of those that are asleep to speak*, after in prayer we have been *caught up to the third heavens*, after in prayer we have tasted of those morning-partakings of that excellent inheritance; I say, after those discoveries of God in prayer and other duties, that yet the person will slight that duty? This was the aggravation of the bride her security, *Song* v. 1.

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compared with *v.* 2. In the 1ſt verſe is the enjoyment ſhe had of Chriſt, and yet upon the back of that ſhe ſlights his invitation. It ſays this, Many of us care not for enjoyments of God. Sometimes perſons have found ſo much of God in prayer, that they have been forced to call the place of their praying *Eben-ezer*, the place of living after ſeeing; yet, after that to ſlight duty, what a dreadful offence is that! and how will God contend with that perſon, after the Lord hath appeared unto him twice!

The *5th* aggravation of it is this, for a perſon to ſlight duty after the Lord at the ſame preſent time is bearing in convictions of the great diſadvantages that do attend the neglect of that duty. It is known, that ſometimes God hath taken pains to point out the diſadvantages that come to us by the neglect of duty; yet even at the ſame very time when ye have known it is *an evil and a bitter thing to depart from the Lord*, and to ſlight his commandments, I ſay, at the ſame time, you thro' ſlothfulneſs will cry out, *Yet a little ſleep, and a little ſlumber, and a little folding of the hands to ſleep:* Now, is not this a great ſin, to ſlight duty, after the unanſwerable convictions of the diſadvantages that they have by the neglect of it?

The *6th* aggravation of ſlothfulneſs, and which ſometimes accompanies it, is, for perſons to ſlight known duty, after ſtrong reſolutions and covenants taken upon their hearts, that they would not ſlight duty any more. Did not ſome take on reſolutions at the laſt communion in this place, ſuch as, I ſhall be more in ſecret duty than ever I was before? did not ſome take on that reſolution, God ſhall be more the delight of my ſoul, and the cover of my eyes, and the deſire of my heart, than ever he was before?

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Now, hast thou not slighted those duties, after those bonds and resolutions taken on upon thy heart? And what is this? is it not to have that written upon thy fore-head, Lo, this man *dealt deceitfully with God, and was not stedfast in his covenant?*

The 7*th* aggravation that waits upon slothfulness is, for persons to slight duty after they have been convinced of this, that God was contending with others for slighting of it; that is to sin against justice.

There is this *last* aggravation of it, namely; Are there not some persons here to-day, that have heard some when they were passing in through the gates of death, when the eye-strings have begun to break, and the shadows of death have been sitting on their eye-lids, have this complaint, Alas for the days that I have slighted duty so much! I think, there are many that sometimes have heard such a complaint; and what a dreadful aggravation is this of thy sin? I shall say of the professors of this time, It is possible some of them may be saved, but I doubt much if there be many of the professors of this time that shall be saved but so as by fire. And what is the reason that many persons who die in those days (whom we in charity suppose to have Christ in them the hope of glory) enter into heaven under a cloud? is it not this, their not exercising themselves unto godliness, and their not making it their work?

The *third* thing that I shall speak to, and with which I shall close, is, I shall mention some disadvantages thatwait upon this evil of slothfulness.

And the *first* that I shall name shall be this in in the text; Slothfulness is the mother of deep security. Some persons ask, What is the reason that they have a sleeping conscience, sleeping affections, and a sleeping judgment? it is even this, Thou art not

not diligent in duty: *Slothfulneſs caſteth into a deep ſleep*; it is like a nurſe, it rocks you in the cradle of a deep ſleep. Slothfulneſs hath made many ſleep a long time; and if there were no more to preſs you to guard againſt it but this, that it is the mother of ſecurity, it were more than ſufficient.

2*dly*, The ſlothful Chriſtian is the Chriſtian that hath not much communion with God, nor enjoyment of him. Many in theſe days have this queſtion, What is the reaſon that God and I never meet? in preaching and prayer, and every duty that I go about, this may be written upon it, *God is not here.* What is the reaſon that I go not in ſometimes to the *chambers of preſence*, and am not ſatisfied with *hony out of the rock?* it is even this, Slothfulneſs and neglect of duty is that which draws a vail between Chriſt and you. This is clear, *Prov.* xxii. *ult. Seeſt thou a man diligent in his buſineſs? he ſhall ſtan dbefore the King.* We may take the words in a ſpiritual ſenſe, that a Chriſtian diligent in his duty, and active in his work, ſhall ſtand before the King, and have enjoyment of God; according to that word, *The hand of the diligent ſhall be made rich*; and that word, *The ſoul of the diligent ſhall be made fat.* Now, the reaſon that oft-times there is a vail drawn between Chriſt and thee, is this, neglect of duty.

A 3*d* diſadvantage that comes by ſlothfulneſs is; It is the riſe and original of thoſe decays, backſlidings and ruins of the work of God, which are in the hearts of many in thoſe days. Are there not many who may write this on their fore-heads, *Decay, decay, decay?* What is the reaſon that love, faith, tenderneſs and mortification are dying within us ſo much? even the dreadful ſlothfulneſs and ſlighting of duty that is with us? *Eccl.* x. 18. *By much ſlothfulneſs of the hands the houſe drops through,*

through, and the building doth decay. Thy slothfulness in known duty is that which makes thy building to decay. I suppose, some make so little progress in the duties of religion, and their building doth so little advance, that they may be put to that question, Shall ever the *cope-stone be put on*, and I have occasion to cry, *Grace, grace to it?*

The *4th* disadvantage that comes by slothfulness is this; It doth impair, darken and exceedingly deform the beauty and excellency of the Christian. Slothfulness makes Christians like the beggars; once they were in an excellent estate, and now they are become exceeding low thro' slothfulness. This is clear from that word, *Prov.* xxiii. 21. *Drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.* The beautiful robes, and the change of raiment, that once they were clothed with, are now taken away, and (as it were) they are now clothed with rags.

5thly, It is the rise of the prevailing power our idols have over us. Some ask that question, What is the reason my idols do so much prevail? it is even this, Thou art slothful. This is clear, *Prov.* xii. 24. *The hand of the diligent shall bear rule, but the slothful shall be under tribute.* The slothful Christian shall be in subjection to his lusts and idols. It is no wonder every temptation that meets us prevail over us, because we are not diligent. We that do engage ourselves in this blessed war, do intangle ourselves with the vanities of the world.

The *6th* disadvantage that waits upon it is this; Slothfulness and neglect of duty is the mother of formality in duty. What is the reason that some, when they go to prayer, are under so many bonds? it is even this, Ye pray but seldom, and so ye cannot have much liberty when ye pray. Some pray so seldom times to God, that in a manner, when they pray,

pray, they cannot get words to tell what ails them. This is clear, *Iſa.* lxiv. 7. where theſe two are joined together: Says he, *There is none that call upon God*; and immediately it is ſubjoined, *There is none that ſtirs up himſelf to take hold of thee.* No queſtion, if a Chriſtian would endeavour to be ſerious and active, he would be diligent.

The *7th* diſadvantage that waits upon ſlothfulneſs is this; A ſlothful Chriſtian is the Chriſtian that breaks forth into debates anent his intereſt. It is impoſſible for a ſlothful Chriſtian to be in much clearneſs concerning his peace with God. What is the reaſon that the conſciences of ſome perſons ſpeak ſuch terrible things againſt them? it is this, They exerciſe not themſelves unto godlineſs. What is the reaſon that ſome of us have not *the peace of God, which paſſes all underſtanding, guarding our hearts and minds?* it is becauſe we do not *in every thing by prayer and ſupplication make known our requeſts unto God with thankſgiving.*

The *laſt* diſadvantage that comes by ſlothfulneſs is this; All duties of religion become a burden unto the ſlothful Chriſtian. What is the reaſon that preaching becomes a burden to many, and all that God requires we cannot abide it? it is even ſlothfulneſs. That is a ſtrange word, *Prov.* xv. 19. *The way of the ſluggard is as a hedge of thorns*; (a ſlothful Chriſtian, before he would pray, would rather go through a hedge of thorns and jag himſelf) *but the way of the righteous ſhall be made plain*, or, as the word is, it is as a *cauſey*: The way of the diligent Chriſtian is as for one to go all along upon a cauſey. Now I ſay, If ye would have the duties of religion to become your delight, then be much in the exerciſe of Chriſtian diligence.

I ſhall not ſtand to ſpeak much more at this time,

it not being the multiplying of words that will do it. I shall only add; That ye may go away with advantage by what is said, I would say two words by way of application: And,

1*st*, I would seriously desire you that are slighters of duties, not only in publick, but when ye are alone; I would desire you, that this day ye would be engaged to set about the duty of prayer. I think there are many houses in *Glasgow* that are very like hell, there being nothing heard in them but the voice of cursing and sinful speaking. Ye do not indeed know God, and therefore ye do not care for the serving of him.

There are three great objections in the hearts of them that are unacquaint with God, which hinder them from the exercise of prayer.

The first is this, "O what need I pray, or obey "the minister, when he bids me read the scriptures, "and hear preachings, and think upon my own "state and condition? for, if I be predestinate to "life, I will win to heaven, whether I pray and "read or no; and if I be predestinate to hell, tho' "I should pray and weep all my days, I will never "win to heaven." That is the very old temptation of the devil: But I say this; May ye not argue thus with your own hearts also, If I be appointed to be a rich man, I shall become rich tho' I never put my hands to labour? and, 2*dly*, Why will ye not also reason thus with yourselves, If I be appointed to live forty years, I need neither eat nor drink; for I will live that time whether I eat or drink or no? For ye may as well say that, as to say, I may win to heaven tho' I never pray, if I be predestinate to go there. I say this to you, God hath made a sweet conjunction between the end and the means that lead unto that end; God hath predestinated to life,

life, thro' the believing on his Son. So that there is a connection between the decree of God, and the end of it, and the midſt that leads unto that end.

The ſecond objection is this; "I cannot pray, I "know not what to ſay to God." I had occaſion to preſs this at more length yeſterday. I would only ſay this; Thou condemneſt thyſelf, that ſayeſt thou canſt not pray, when thou haſt a tongue to ſpeak, and a heart to think. A perſon is bound in conſcience by the commandment of the Lord, tho' he ſhould not pray with his heart, to pray with his tongue: I ſay, Pray with thy tongue, if it were but that word, *Lord help me to pray*, till thy heart come up this length. That is a ſtrange word, *Hoſ.* xiv. 2. *Take with you words, and ſay*, &c. Now, what knoweſt thou but God will bring up thy heart, when thou canſt not bring it up thyſelf?

And there is that third objection of ſome; "Alas! "ſay ſome, I ſin more when I pray than when I let "alone prayer." To this I anſwer, Perhaps thou ſinneſt not more in prayer than when thou doſt neglect it; but oft-times it is thus, thou ſeeſt thy ſins better when thou prayeſt, than when thou art out of prayer; this is the ground of that objection: Thou ſinneſt not more in prayer, but thou ſeeſt thy ſins more in prayer, than when thou art out of it. And I would further ſay, Oughteſt thou to caſt out with prayer, becauſe thou ſinneſt much in it? for it is not the fault of prayer that thou ſinneſt much in it, but thy own fault. Is this good divinity? I am a very ſinful man, and therefore I will not go to Chriſt; and I am polluted, therefore I will never go to the fountain to waſh me?

Now, there is this, 2*dly*, that I would cloſe with: I would give that advice to all of you that are here,

which the mariners gave to *Jonah*, chap. i. 6. *O sleepers, arise and call upon your God.* Since your work is great, and your day is almost spent, I intreat you to be serious, and stirring in duty. It were a shame for some of us to tell how seldom we pray; nay, we have come that length, to slight prayer without a conviction. I would say to such, Look that the dreadful sentence which was past upon the servant that received one talent, and went and hid it in a nakpin, be not they lot; *Unfaithful servant, take him, and bind him hand and feet, and cast him into utter darkness*, &c. I pray you, what account will ye make of all your gifts, of all your opportunities to serve God, and of all the sermons and lectures ye have heard from the word of the Lord? There are many to whom I may give that reproof which *Pharaoh* gave to the children of *Israel*; *Ye are idle, ye are idle.* I would give that advice to many that are here, which Christ gave unto him who stood idle in the market-place, *Why stand ye here idle all the day?* This is your time and occasion for you to work; and I would desire to know what ye intend to do, since all day ye stand idle, and do not work. No doubt this holds true, a person that will not work should not eat. There are some Christians like rich merchants, who have gathered much, and do now sit down and spend of the stock: So some Christians feed upon their experiences, and think they are far enough advanced; they say to their own hearts, as that rich man said, *Soul, take thy rest, for thou hast food for many days.* A Christian that has taken that course, shall go halting to heaven. I shall say no more, but, O stir up yourselves; O careless daughters, awake; and, O ye that are asleep, stand up, and Christ shall give you light.

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SERMON XII.

Prov. xix. 15.

Slothfulneſs caſteth into a deep Sleep.——

THERE are four things which *Solomon* ſpeaks of, *Prov.* xxx. 24.—36. every one of which may teach man a ſpiritual leſſon and doctrine: Firſt the *Ants*, which may teach a man that leſſon of Chriſtian providence, that *tho' they be a people not ſtrong, yet they provide their meat in the ſummer.* This ought to be the duty of every Chriſtian, to be providing againſt the day of ſtraits. There is a ſecond beaſt commended, and that is the *Conies*; who may teach a Chriſtian that leſſon of humanity and ſelf-denial, in regard *tho' they be but a feeble folk, yet they make their refuge in the rocks*; that ſo a Chriſtian, not being ſtrong in himſelf, might *flee to the Rock which is ſtronger than himſelf.* The third beaſt that he commends is the *Locuſts*, who *have no king, yet go forth all by bands:* Thus a Chriſtian ſhould march forth in order under his King, when he goes out to fight. The fourth beaſt that he commends is the *Spider*, which *taketh hold with its hands, and is in kings palaces*; which may teach a man this leſſon of Chriſtian diligence, that he ſhould take hold of his duty, and work that he may be brought into the King's preſence. I would only ſay this; Slothfulneſs is the abomination that ſits upmoſt in our hearts. It was an antient obſervation of *Solomon*, Prov. xviii. 9. *He that is ſloth-*

ful in his own buſineſs is brother to him that is a great waſter. And I think, if this were the fruit and advantage of our doctrine, that perſons under this idol of ſlothfulneſs were wakned and ſtirred up to diligence, we might go away with joy. As for you that have *Chriſt in you the hope of glory*, I would ask this queſtion at you; Do ye not think Chriſt as precious as ever he was? is there not as much ſweetneſs, as much advantage to be found in Chriſt, as ever was to be found in him? Now, if it be ſo, what is the reaſon we take ſo little pains to correſpond with him? what is the reaſon that there is ſo little travelling of the ſoul between infinite emptineſs and infinite fulneſs, infinite inability in a Chriſtian to help himſelf, and compleat ability in Chriſt to help him; that the one deep is not crying unto the other deep? Many of us are like to go down to our graves in our miſery and barrenneſs, becauſe of our ſlothfulneſs.

At the laſt occaſion that we ſpoke upon theſe words, I told you that there are four obſervations in them; the firſt of which was, "That ſlothful-"neſs and neglect of duty was an evil ordinarily in-"cident unto many." This, we told you, was clear in the ſcope; and from this truth we have ſpoken to ſeveral things. There are yet three things that remain further to be ſpoken to from it.

The *firſt* thing that I ſhall ſpeak to at this time is, To propoſe ſome conſiderations to preſs you to guard againſt this evil of ſlothfulneſs and neglect of duty; and I would exhort you, ſince it is not a matter of ſmall concernment, and ſince everlaſting advantage lies in the doing of duty, that ye would be ſtirred up, by theſe conſiderations, now at laſt to take this bond upon your heart, that ye ſhall be exerciſed unto godlineſs.

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The *firſt* conſideration is this; The work that a Chriſtian hath to do is exceeding great, and his journey very long; and therefore awake, and be not ſlothful. I ſuppoſe, there are ſome here that may take up this complaint, There is much of my day ſpent, and there is not much of my work done; yea, that there are ſome who have ſpent a great part of their day, and yet are to begin their work. Now, ſince it is certain that your work is great, then, O ſleeper, awake, and ſhake off your ſlothfulneſs. Is not faith, and believing in the name of the Son of God, a great work? Is not mortification to thy idols a great work? is not ſanctification, and attaining to a bleſſed conformity with God, a great work? is not patience a great work? is not aſſurance of our being in Chriſt a great work? and is not heavenly-mindedneſs a great work? And, ſince all theſe great works are before you, will ye not then ſhake off your ſlothfulneſs, and ſtir up yourſelves? This may be clear, 1 *Pet.* chap. i. where he preſſes to diligence, from the greatneſs of their work; and therefore he ſets down there all the great works of religion, as if he would preſs them to diligence from theſe, that faith, meekneſs, patience, virtue and brotherly love are to be done by them. Know ye not, that a perſon that hath a great work to do, will riſe early in the morning to do it? and a perſon that hath a long journey to go againſt night, will riſe by the breaking of the day? And think ye eternity is not approaching? What do ye, O ſleepers, ſlothful, and neglecters of the work that is of your everlaſting concernment? will ye not now be provoked to ſhake off that lazineſs that now hath overtaken you? I would ſay that word to every one of us, *It is high time for us to awake*, for *our day is far ſpent. Awake, O ſleepers, and call upon your God.*

God. I think, a Christian ought to answer all his temptations with the like of that word wherewith *Nehemiah* answered the messengers of *Sanballat*, *I have a great work to do, and therefore I cannot come to you*, Neh. vi. 7. I say, when a temptation assaults thee, thou mayst say this, O temptation, I have a great work to do, and therefore I cannot obey thee.

The *second* consideration, to press you to guard against slothfulness, is; That as the work is great, so the time, and the day in which thou must do the work, is very short. It was a word of Christ's, *John* xi. 9. *There are twelve hours in the day, in which a man may work, and walk, and not stumble: But the night comes*, &c. I say, What knowest thou but this is the eleventh hour of thy day, and thou hast but one hour to work in? That is a precious word of Christ's, *I must walk while it is to-day, for the night cometh in which no man can work.* What know we (some of us) but this may be the last preaching we shall be at? what know we but some of us that are here, that are lusty and strong, may yet be walking upon the borders of eternity, and before night we may hear the dead-bell go for them? Now, since your day is short and very uncertain, then be provoked to rise from your sleep, and fall to your work, that, when your Master comes, he may *find you so doing.* But let not this scar any of you at religion, that the work of it is so great, and the day short: If thou hast a great work, comfort thyself with this, thou hast also a great reward if thou accomplish thy work; if thy work be great, there is a great recompence of reward also. 2. There is great *help laid upon One that is mighty*, that shall be communicate to thee for doing thy work. 3. Is thy work great, and thy day short? yet be press'd to set

ſet about thy work, becauſe there is a neceſſity lying upon thee for doing the work of this day.

The *third* conſideration, to preſs you to guard againſt ſlothfulneſs, is this; The ſlighting of the duties of religion hath an eternal diſadvantage waiting upon it; therefore, I ſay, awake, and ſtir up yourſelves. If the neglect of the duties of religion were attended only with outward diſadvantages, then ye might with more liberty cry out, *Yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber*; but ſince the neglect of the duties of religion hath eternal diſadvantages waiting upon it, then I ſay, O ſleeper, awake, and ſhake off thy ſluggiſhneſs. The day is approaching, when the perſons in *Glaſgow* that have ſlighted private worſhip, publick ordinances and the duties of religion moſt, ſhall cry out, Alas for the day that ever I ſlighted thoſe things ſo much! and O for the time again, and for ſermons again! I ſhould never ſlight them ſo much as I have done. What makes us to ſlight the duties of religion? It is even this, we do not indeed believe there is eternal diſadvantage waiting upon the ſlighting of them. O you who ſlight Chriſt both when ye are alone and when ye are in company, let this provoke you, that the ſlighting of theſe things that are clearly pointed out to be your duty, may bring eternal deſtruction upon you, when *your poverty ſhall come upon you as an armed man, and as travail upon a woman with child.*

The *fourth* conſideration, to preſs you to guard againſt ſlothfulneſs, is this; There are eight things that ſlothfulneſs kills: 1*ſt*, It kills many precious and excellent convictions. Perhaps there are ſome who go home from ſermon with this conviction, "I am "a right ſlothful Chriſtian, and right far below my "duty." Now, what becomes of all your convictions? ſlothfulneſs, the great murderer, ruines and mur-

murders them all. There are some who are convinced, and say, "Alas, I want love:" Yet slothfulness kills that conviction. Some are convinced of this, "I am yet a stranger to the Son of God, and "unacquainted with him:" And yet slothfulness kills that conviction. Slothfulness is to conviction like *Pharaoh* to the male-children of *Israel*, assoon as they are born it drowns them, and puts them away. How oft have ye been convinced? and yet slothfulness banishes your convictions. 2. It kills many precious and excellent resolutions. Is it not certain that sometimes a Christian, at such a fast and at such a communion, took on such resolutions and purposes? and what became of them all? even slothfulness cut the neck of all these resolutions, and makes all our *goodness to be as the early cloud, and as the morning-dew.* Is there a person here, that is not convinced that they have broken the resolutions they took on at the last communion they were at? Now, what has done it? even slothfulness; thou dost not take pains to prosecute thy resolutions, and bring them up to performance. Some of us resolve to-day, and break to-morrow. 3. It kills many precious and excellent desires after God, and after Jesus Christ. Will not sometimes the soul have desires for communion with God? and will it not sometimes cry forth, O *when shall I come and appear before him?* and put up that desire, O to be near him, and to be made conform to his image! and slothfulness kills those desires, and makes them to evanish and fly away. 4. It kills many precious and excellent motions of the Spirit of God. Is it not certain, that Christ will sometimes come unto thy heart, and cry out, *Open to me, my sister, my spouse, my dove, my undefiled?* Now, what becomes of these? even slothfulness makes Christ to depart, and kills these excel-

lent

lent motions of the Spirit. 5. It kills many ſweet and excellent enjoyments of God. What is the reaſon that Chriſtians are oft-times brought to put up this complaint, "If this were Chriſt whom I have found, "would he not *reſt in his love*, and ſtay longer "with me; but (as it were) his viſits are but ſtand-"ing viſits; he comes, and preſently he is gone a-gain?" it is even ſlothfulneſs that kills many ſweet and excellent enjoyments. 6. Slothfulneſs kills in a great meaſure (at leaſt it brings to the very gates of ſpiritual death) the graces of faith and of love; ſo that Chriſt may take that complaint againſt them, They are *fallen from their firſt love*. And what is the reaſon that ſo many are weak in the faith? it is even this, ſlothfulneſs. 7. It kills in a very great meaſure our hatred againſt ſin, and deteſtation of our idols. Believe it, ſlothfulneſs is one of the ſtrongeſt and ſilenteſt proctors for our idols. What is the reaſon that ſo many perſons have ſo little hatred and deteſtation to ſin? ſlothfulneſs hath eaten out the hatred; as it were, ſlothfulneſs is that which takes up the matter, and makes peace between our idols and our hearts. 8. It kills the ſtrength that ſometimes a Chriſtian hath had in reſiſting and wreſtling againſt his temptations. What is the reaſon that not only a temptation, but the very ſhadow of a temptation, is able to overcome us? it is becauſe of ſlothfulneſs. There is nothing that ſome people meet with, but it becomes a temptation to them; affliction and poverty becomes their temptation, proſperity and abundance becomes their temptation, applauſe and approbation becomes a temptation, want of applauſe and approbation becomes a temptation, liberty in prayer becomes a temptation, want of liberty, bonds in prayer become a temptation to them; yea, a wife becomes a temptation to her husband,

and

and children become a temptation to parents: Almost such is the cursed frame of our heart, that we can cast our eyes upon nothing but it becomes a temptation to us.

The *fifth* consideration, to provoke you to guard against slothfulness, is this; If a spirit be slothful in doing the work of religion, then no doubt it is most active in the work of the devil; for it is impossible to keep the spirit of man idle: Therefore, if thy spirit be not active in doing the work of religion, unquestionably it will be diligent in the work of the devil; it is impossible to keep the spirit of a man not active about something. Our spirits are not idle when we sleep: I do not question, but I am sure of it, the spirit of man may do as much sin when he is sleeping as might ruine a thousand worlds; when our eyes sleep, our spirits sleep not. This is indeed a strange thing, which as it proves the immortality of the soul, so it proves this, that there is a root of bitterness springing within us night and day.

There is this *sixth* consideration, to press you to this; Slothfulness is that which blackens the beauty and excellency of a Christian. What is the reason that Christians, who were once *white as the snow*, and pure as the eagle, are now become *black as a raven?* what is the reason that Christians are become so airy like, that we have lost the beauty that once the saints had? what is the reason that we are so degenerate, that we are neither father-like nor brother-like? This is clear, *Prov.* xxiv. 30, 31. saith *Solomon*, *I past by the field of the slothful man; and lo, it was grown over with weeds.* Ye know, a Christian is called, in the *Song*, *a Garden inclosed*, in which there ought to grow nothing but *pleasant plants:* And what is the reason that he, who ought to be a garden trim-

trimmed, is now a field of thorns? it is even our ſlothfulneſs. Slothfulneſs is that which makes us unpleaſant in the ſight of God.

The *ſeventh* conſideration, to provoke you to guard againſt ſlothfulneſs, is this; That ſlothfulneſs hath theſe three notable prejudices and diſadvantages waiting on it. *1ſt*, It is the mother of much ſenſleſs misbelief, and formal diſputings of our intereſt in Chriſt. I may allude to that word, (if not more) *Pſal.* xiv. 4. compared with *v.* 5. *They call not upon God*; and immediately it is ſubjoined, *There were they in great fear:* I ſay, Slothfulneſs in duty is that which is the riſe of many of our diſputings. I do not ſay that diligence would looſe many of our knots; but I am ſure, if the Chriſtians of this time were more diligent, there would be fewer diſputings (I mean formally) of our intereſt in God. If ſo I may ſpeak by the way, there is a four-fold form that Chriſt doth exceedingly hate; there is a form of religion wanting the power of it, there is a form of knowledge wanting the life of it, there is a form of duty wanting the ſubſtance of it, and a form of exerciſe wanting the real exerciſe. It is no wonder God give ſome of us a dreadful exerciſe; for, when we want an exerciſe, we counterfeit an exerciſe: But I think a Chriſtian needs never want an exerciſe; for, when thou wanteſt an exerciſe, this may be an exerciſe to thee, that thou wanteſt an exerciſe. The *2d* diſadvantage that comes by ſlothfulneſs is this; It is the mother of apoſtaſy and declining: It may provok the juſtice of God to write thy ſpot upon thy forehead, that all that paſs by ſhall cry out, There is the perſon that *made not the God of Jacob his refuge.* One to a hundred if a ſlothful Chriſtian go off the world without a ſpot; and if he go off the world without ſome diſpenſation of the anger of God,

or

or some wonderful exercise, I would have that person suspecting whither he is going. And what wonder is it, since prayer is that which seeks strength from God to help him in his way? I would say this by the way, O sluggards that are in this house, professors that are sitten up, and sitten down upon the length which ye have attained, what know ye but there may be a temptation within some days march of you, that may make you a scandal unto the gospel, and the gospel a scandal unto you? what knowest thou, O sitten-up professor, but ere night thy spot many be written on thy forehead in legible letters, that all that pass by may read it? The 3*d* disadvantage that waits upon it is this; A slothful Christian is a naked Christian. Ye know what I mean by a naked Christian; I mean these two: 1. A slothful Christian is naked, because his *shame doth appear*. 2. I mean by a naked Christian this; A slothful Christian is an open bait to all temptations. The devil needs not use a word to a slothful Christian but one; yea, if so I may speak in such a grave purpose, if the devil do but wag his finger upon a slothful Christian, he will run after him. The devil needs not fight much with a slothful Christian, he fights against himself. I say therefore, guard against slothfulness; and therefore is that word, *Mat.* xxvi. 41. *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*

The *last* consideration, to move you to guard against slothfulness, is this; Slothfulness brings a Christian to much spiritual poverty. I mean not that poverty which is mentioned, *Mat.* v. 3. I mean that poverty which is accompanied with much decay; and hence is that word, *Prov.* x. 4. *He that dealeth with a slack hand shall become poor.* What is the reason that we are decayed and become poor? it is even this, we are not *fervent in spirit, diligent in business, serving*

ſerving the Lord. There are three ſorts of religion, none of which are right; and, if we were all ſearched, we would be found one of thoſe ſorts. There is, 1*ſt*, the ſluggard's religion, and that is a moſt predominant religion; (if I may ſo ſpeak, it is one of the rifeſt ſorts in the world, it is that which I call the ſluggard's religion) *his ſoul deſires and hath nothing, becauſe his hands refuſe to labour.* If deſires could have brought a ſoul to heaven, then *Balaam* had been in heaven, for he had many excellent deſires. The 2*d* ſort of religion which is not right (and it is alſo moſt rife in thoſe days) is the hypocrite's religion: There is as much difference between a hypocrite and a real Chriſtian, as is between a painted man and a real man. I confeſs, a hypocrite has the out-ſide of religion, but he wants the inward part of it. A 3*d* ſort of religion which is alſo moſt rife, and yet comes ſhort of true religion, is the conceity, preſumptuous and proud religion. Many think to win to heaven by their own righteouſneſs; but they have a better conceit of themſelves than God hath of them.

The *ſecond* thing that I ſhall ſpeak to at this time is this; Are there none of you that, ſince we began to ſpeak of thoſe diſadvantages that wait upon ſlothfulneſs, are provoked to cry out, O how ſhall I get ſlothfulneſs killed and amended? I ſhall now propoſe thoſe eight or nine remedies of this evil.

1*ſt*, O ſluggard, wouldſt thou be diligent? then let the lively impreſſion of thy need of that which thou ſeekeſt from God be ingraven upon thy heart. What is the reaſon that the Chriſtians of this time are not diligent? it is becauſe they know not their need. Ye know that word which we uſe, *Neceſſity makes dumb men orators*; and we may add, Neceſſity makes

makes lame men to labour. If we saw our necessity, we would not take a refusal. If so I may speak, necessity is one of the most unmannerly things that can be; for it will not go away from God's door till he answer it. O! necessity would make us diligent in the things that he calls us unto, *Psal.* xxxiv. 6. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.* It were an excellent sight, if every one of us got a sight of our necessities; for I suppose some of us are as great strangers unto our own hearts, as if we were living at a thousand miles distance from one another.

The 2*d* thing that I would propose, as a remedy of this evil, is this; O sluggard, study to be much acquainted with God, and to have much of the knowledge of the most High. This is clear, *Job* xxii. 27. compared with *v.* 22. *Acquaint thyself now with God*; and this is the fruit of it, *And thou shalt make thy prayer unto him*, or, as the word may be rendered, *Then shalt thou make many strong prayers.* John iv. 10. *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that speaks unto thee, thou wouldst have asked from him*, &c. What is the reason we correspond so little with God? it is because we know him not.

3*dly*, O Christian, wouldst thou be diligent? then walk within sight of approaching death and judgment. O Christian, wouldst thou shake hands with cold earth every day, wouldst thou walk within sight of this, that once thou must appear before him; it would provoke thee to be diligent. This is clear by comparing these two places, 2 *Cor.* v. *ult.* and *Eccl.* ix. 17. together; *That which thou doest, do it with all thy might:* And the argument is, that eternity approaches, in which thou canst do nothing. I am sure of it, if in the morning we were thinking that

that we are now a day nearer eternity than before, it were impoſſible for us to be ſo ſlothful as we are.

The *4th* remedy that I would propoſe is this; That a Chriſtian ſhould be walking under the impreſſion of the ſweet conſtraining love of God; that the ſoul ſhould be under the ſweet impreſſion of Chriſt's love. This is clear, 2 *Cor.* v. 14. where *Paul*, ſetting down the principle of his obedience, hath that word, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us.*

The *5th* remedy that I would propoſe is this; That a Chriſtian ſhould walk under the impreſſions of the omniſcience of God. This is clear, *Pſal.* cxix. 168. *I have kept thy precepts and thy teſtimonies:* And the thing that leads him to do it is that; *for all my ways are before thee.* Would ye know (ſaye he) why I am ſuch a diligent Chriſtian? it was, I knew there was nothing I did but the Lord knew it.

The *6th* remedy that I would preſcribe is this; Study to have thy heart inclined and engaged to the doing of duty. This was *David*'s practice, *Pſal.* cxix. 112. *I have inclined my heart to perform thy ſtatutes alway, even unto the end:* Which is indeed a thing moſt remarkable, never to be out of obedience of his commandments, and that not for a while, but *always, even to the end.* And, *v.* 167. *My ſoul keeps thy teſtimonies:* And what leads him to it? *I love them.* So that to have thy heart engaged unto the duties of religion, would make thee a diligent Chriſtian.

The *7th* remedy that I would propoſe is this; I would charge every one that is here, young and old, profeſſors and not profeſſors, ye that know God, and ye that are ignorant of him; I obteſt and deſire you to-day, in his name, to take that bond of love upon your heart, that ye may take this reſolution away with

you, I shall never be such a slothful Christian any more. This was *David*'s practice, *Psal.* cxix. 126, *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy words.* I do not press you to hold up your hands; but I press you in the sight of God the Father the first Person of the blessed Trinity, and in the sight of the Son the second Person of the blessed Trinity, and in the sight of the holy Ghost the third Person of the blessed Trinity, and in the sight of all the angels and saints that are about the throne, and of all the people that are here, that this be the oath that thou wilt swear, and study to perform, that thou wilt not be so slothful any more.

The 8*th* remedy that I would prescribe is this; If thou wouldst be above the idol of slothfulness, then study to keep thyself under high, stately and majestick apprehensions of God. I am sure of this, the low conceptions we have of the Majesty of God are the cause why many of us bow our knee so seldom to him. That is a strange word of the Psalmist, *I gave myself to prayer*; or, as the word is, *I prayer.* He would say, I am so much taken up in that work, that they may call my name *Prayer.*

I shall not at this time speak much more unto you; only I would have you taking these two words home with you. *First*, Will ye think, and *secondly* consider, what is the exercise of the saints that are above, of whom that word may be said, They have *died in the Lord, and rest from their labours, their reward is with them, and their works follow them.* I say, Think what is the exercise of all those glorious thousands that are round about the throne, who have now entred into the glorious and eternal possession and enjoyment of God, to whom Wisdom's ways, while they were here, were pleasant? I am sure, the day is coming when the Christian that

that is moſt in the duties of religion ſhall not repent it: Never a perſon went down to his grave without this conviction, Wo is me that I ſpent ſo little of my time in the duties of religion. Are there not ſome here, that have not ſpoken their prayers to God to-day? there are ſome that have come to that length, they either ſlight duties without conviction, or elſe without ſorrow if they be convinced; for the neglect of duty, they do not mourn for it. Now, think ye heaven will be given without work? know ye not that word, *The kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence?* &c. O can ſuch a deluſion as this overtake you? think ye to win to heaven without prayer! Dare I ſay that word? (I deſire to be miſtaken) I doubt much if there was a generation ſince Chriſt was in the fleſh, in which there were fewer heirs of ſalvation than there ſhall be in this. I think, we have ſerved ourſelves heirs to all the evils that are incident to the people of God in any age before.

And there is this that I would ſay; I confeſs it is matter of aſtoniſhment to us, that, tho' God is taking ſo much pains upon us, there ſhould be ſo little ſtirring and moving of our heart in duties of religion. O *Glaſgow*'s ignorance of God! I may ſpeak it to your ſhame: I doubt not but there are ſome in *Glaſgow*, who by their want of knowledge do not difference themſelves from pagans; that, tho' they be thirty or forty or eighty years old, do not know that there is a God. I am afraid one of theſe three ſad and lamentable ſentences is paſt upon many in this place: Either, 1*ſt*, that ſentence, 1 *Cor.* xiv 38. *Him that is ignorant, let him be ignorant ſtill:* If there be any perſon that hath not the knowledge of the moſt High, let him be ignorant ſtill; ſhut his eyes, that he do not ſee, nor underſtand the things that belong to his peace. No queſtion I have

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have ground to say, There may be many upon whom this sentence is past. Or, 2*dly*, I fear that dreadful sentence is past upon many, *Rev.* xxii. 11. (which is the seal of the prophecy, as the words going before shew) *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still:* Of which that word is an explication, *Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.* Or, 3*dly*, That sentence, *Ezek.* xxiv. *I would have purged thee, and thou wouldst not be purged; as I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt not be purged any more till thou die.* As it were, God with his hand lifted up to heaven hath sworn this with an oath, O sluggard, thou wouldst not be purged, and thou shalt not be purged any more till thou die. But some of us are under such hardness and stupidity, that all those threatnings will not occasion one sad thought. I shall say no more but (O that I could say it before him! I do not desire this evil day; but I may say this) I am sure there have been such pains taken upon you these several years past, that, if the like pains had been taken upon the heathen, they would brought forth more answerable fruit. And I may say this, O *Glasgow, Glasgow, if the things that have been done in thee, had been done in* Tyre *and* Sidon, *or* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, *they had repented long ago in dust and ashes.* Now, *what wilt thou do in the day of desolation, when destruction shall come from afar? where will ye flee for rest? and where will ye leave your glory?* It is he that can commend this word to you, and cause you to stand up from the dead, that he may give you life: And to him be the praise.

The End of the first Volume.

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